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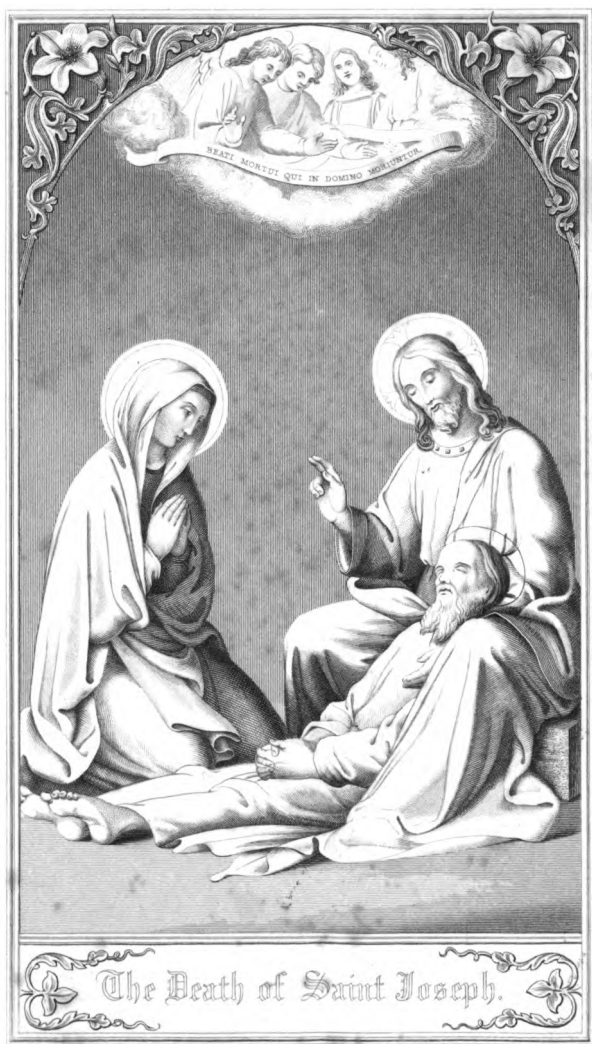




*Saint Mary and her times,
a poem, by the authoress of Geraldine*

Eleanor C. Agnew





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Saint Mary and Her Son :

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HIS EMINENCE, THE

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Saint Mary and Her Times ;

A POEM,

IN FOURTEEN CANTOS.



DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO
HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN,
BY
THE AUTHORESS OF GERALDINE, &c.



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**THE AUTHORITY IS FOURFOLD ON WHICH IS FOUNDED THE
FOLLOWING POEM :—I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES—II. TRA-
DITION—III. THE WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS
—IV. THOSE REVELATIONS TO DIFFERENT SAINTS WHICH
HAVE BEEN PROPOSED BY THE CHURCH TO THE PIOUS
CONSIDERATION OF HER CHILDREN.**

Table of Contents.

Hymn to the holy Name of Mary . . .	Page v
CANTO I.—Feast of Tabernacles. Discourse of the Elders. Records of the famous Men of Israel. Coming of Messiah discussed	1
CANTO II.—Bower of the Women of David's Line. Anna, Wife of Joachim. Conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles. Joachim and Anna go up to Jerusalem. Their separate Vow.	11
CANTO III.—The Abode of separate Spirits. Adam and Eve. The stain of Original Sin on every Soul. The sublime scheme of Redemption. The Soul of Mary. Hymn sung in Limbo. Eve's prophecy. Adam's prophecy.	20
CANTO IV.—Birth of Saint Mary. Anna's convictions. Joachim's doubts. Mary's Infancy. Mary's Presentation in the Temple.	27
CANTO V.—Typical Feast of the Emissary Goat. Joachim and Anna return to Nazareth. Joachim's Vision and Death. Anna's abode in the Temple. She is appointed to instruct her Daughter. Anna's Death. Description of the Blessed Virgin. Her Vow.	36

CONTENTS.

- CANTO VI.—Joseph Miraculously chosen. His Espousals to the Blessed Virgin. She declares her Vow. The Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel. Mary's Nuptials with God the Holy Ghost. . . . 44**
- CANTO VII.—The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. History of Zachary and Elizabeth. Magnificat. Birth of John the Baptist. Song of Zachary. 53**
- CANTO VIII.—Return to Nazareth. Joseph's sorrow. Mary's silence. Joseph's Vision. Journey to Bethlehem. Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . 64**
- CANTO IX.—Vision of the Shepherds. Adoration of the Shepherds. Circumcision and Name of Jesus. Adoration of the Kings. Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Simeon's Prophecy. Flight into Egypt. Repose in Egypt. . . . 73**
- CANTO X.—Return from Egypt. Abode at Nazareth. Yearly Journey, and Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. Jesus is lost. Is found in the Temple. The hidden life at Nazareth. Death of Joseph. 84**
- CANTO XI.—Public Life of our Lord Jesus Christ. His favours to His Blessed Mother. Her first public Intercession. She is inspired to draw from our Lord His Instruction on the Duty of a Public Teacher. She is a Mother to the early Christian Church. Religious Vocation. . . . 93**

CONTENTS.

- CANTO XII.—Satan's Machinations. Saint Mary participates in the mental anguish of our Lord Jesus Christ. Her knowledge of His corporal sufferings. Hymn on the carriage of the Cross. Mary's sorrow is without remorse. The Virgin Mother at the Cross. Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ. His Sacred Heart 99**
- CANTO XIII.—The Soul of our Lord Jesus Christ arrives in the abode of separate Spirits. The stain of Original Sin is effaced from each Soul. Despair of the Devils and lost Souls. Triumph of the Angels. Taking down from the Cross. Entombment. Resurrection. Ascension. Descent of the Holy Ghost on Saint Mary and the Apostles . 109**
- CANTO XIV.—Mary's resignation to live. A desolate Soul. The Seven Sacraments. Triumph of the Christian Church in Rome. Feast of Corpus Domini. The early Christians. Discipline of the Secret. Re-union of God the Son with His Blessed Mother in His Miracle of Love. Death of the Virgin Mary. 117**
- CANTO XV.—Her Assumption and Glory. Conclusion of the Poem. 126**



THE HOLY NAME OF MARY.

“ And Mary was the maiden’s name,”
Recorded thus to endless fame
By Luke’s inspired pen.
Let us then love the name which heaven
In boundless wisdom thus has given,
For charity to men.

The mystic sense has not alone,
By varied means our order won,
To sound this gentle name :
But rather ’tis that He we love,
Whose choice we ever must approve,
Thus willed and spake the same.

" Lady " it means, and so thou art,
 By royal blood and gentle heart,
 In every sense refined :
 And " bitter " sorrow is thy lot,
 A " sea " of anguish not forgot
 By sympathetic mind.

Thou art the long predicted star,
 Which brightly shining from afar,
 Sends rays of hope and love :
 For He who gave Himself through thee,
 Has willed that thou should'st ever be
 Our guide to Him above.

" Mary !" I love thy name to hear,
 Its cadence falls within mine ear,
 To vibrate in my heart :
 And if 'tis here such melody,
 Far more where angel harmony
 Thrills it in every part !

Saint Mary and Her Times.

CANTO I.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES—DISCOURSE OF THE ELDERS—
RECORDS OF THE FAMOUS MEN OF ISRAEL—COMING OF
THE MESSIAH DISCUSSED.

THE sun had risen high on Judah's plain,
The parched earth lay bare to pant in vain :
No mossy stream, or herbage fresh and fair,
Nor pearly shower, nor soft bedewing air :
By scorching glare oppressed, the wearied eye
In langour turns if haply it espy
A chance oasis, or the timely aid
Of some tall rock, to cast a friendly shade.
That hope is blessed, for lo ! distinctly seen,
Though distant far, the impervious bowers of green ;
Memorial of those forty years of toil,
When Jacob's sons were strangers to the soil.
The Feast of Tabernacles ! Not in vain
We draw where scented branches fill the plain.

B

Each family apart in festive bower,
Where stems, and thickest foliage shade the power
Of fierce meridian sun. With joy are seen
Firmly erect those sylvan halls of green.
Yet 'tis within the beauties are displayed
Of varied form, and tints by nature made :
And so arranged, by aid of graceful art,
The dark, and lighter hues in chosen part,
With pendant buds, and fruits, and wreaths of
flowers,
Never were dwellings known like those sweet
bowers !

Along the eastern side with banner high,
The tribe of Judah lies, now draw we nigh
Where David's royal family are fixed :
Their tabernacle not with others mixed :
But raised apart, in sense of high degree ;
Confirmed by faith, to guard their pedigree.
Lion of Judah's tribe, and David's son,
Messiah ! glory of their race will come :
And filled with earthly hopes of regal state,
They kindred claim to Him, who soon, or late,
Will cause His light on David's sons to shine,
And place them round His throne of power divine.
In number and in valour David's kin,
A little tribe could boast their tribe within,
And each to prove his claim in verity,

Preserved with care his genealogy.
Nor felt his banner tarnished by the call,
Which God's distinct command had given them all,
To labours manuel. A lot decreed
By Wisdom Infinite : hence none might plead
Exemption from this duty, but the priests ;
Yet work was laid aside on these great Feasts,
When resting, as on Sabbaths, they had more
Of jocund mirth, and cheer of plenteous store.
Yet not till offerings had been duly paid,
Of prayer and sacrifice with incense made.
Commemorative was this Feast as writ,
And reverently read from holy Script,
" When in that day of solemn Festival,
Thy Son shall ask thee, saying tell us all,
Why are these yearly bowers of living green,
This meeting of the tribes, this pleasant scene ?"
Thus shalt thou answer, saying " 'Tis my Son,
A record meet of what the Lord hath done :
A heart-felt memory of His love and care,
When houseless wanderers we in desert air.
To us He gave the glorious pillar bright,
For guidance through the darkness of the night :
While hovering 'neath the sun's meridian ray
A cloud its faithful shelter gave by day.
Both figurative those of succour kind,
Within the fearful desert of the mind."
" Yes !" cried an elder in the festive bower,

“Let us adore Eloim, strong in power,
Our fathers, in the desert forty years,
Of toil, and woe, uncertainty and fears :
Tempted to murmur at the drought, and heat,
Regretting Egypt’s leeks, and savory meats :
A stiffnecked race, yet better far than we ;
Valiant in battle, yet obliged to flee ;
Pitching their tents, without a settled home,
Desiring rest, yet ever forced to roam :
In His own time, and by His own right hand,
God brought, at length, to win the promised land
Not those who joined in Moses’ first career,
Of power, miraculous, could enter here ;
Not those who followed through the mighty deep,
And stood, a nation on the rocky steep.
To watch the overthrow of Pharoah’s host,
His sinking chariots, and his empty boast :
Not those who joined in chorus full and strong,
The hymn of Miriam the shores along,
‘Loudly the timbrel sounds o’er Egypt’s sea,
Our God hath triumphed, and his sons are free !’—
Those sinned alas ! but who are we, I ween,
To judge what their temptations must have been.
‘Eloim,’ who on Sinai’s sacred sod,
To Moses said, ‘I am the Lord thy God ;’
Who safely placed him in the chosen cleft,
Lest glory should consume him, and who left
Such splendour on his visage, as to show

His talk with God to all the tribes below ;
Awful in justice, spared not this his friend,
But in the desert brought him to his end :
Not for his wrath, which brake the tables' laws,
Not for his zeal, which urged his people's cause,
But for one only diffidence in God,
When *twice* he struck for water with his rod.
In vain for him beyond the desert sand
Now spread the blessings of the promised land,
The land with yellow corn and vintage glowing,
The land with purest milk and honey flowing :
On Pisgah's height alone he may discern
The chosen plain, and looks submissive turn.
Alas ! for Moses, faithful, humble, meek,
A bright example for us all to seek.
One solitary warning only given
Of want of faith and confidence in heaven.
Last of the patriarchs ! to thee we bow ;
Ah ! that we proved but half as true as thou !"

"We here may ponder o'er the sacred page,
And deeply question, with our elders sage,
Had Moses never sinned he ere had found
Admittance to this dedicated ground ?
The representative was he alone
Of patriarchal law, and not to come
Within the range assigned to prophets here,
Who hold the land until another sphere

Of duties and of dignities will show
The states progressive God has marked below.
The next to come, and which we think at hand,
Will prophecy fulfil throughout the land.
Then sprang brave Joshua at his people's head,
Elect of God, his chosen ones to lead :
And some there are, among our thoughtful men,
Intent to ponder o'er the inspired pen,
The external action diving more within,
Who see in Jericho the fall of sin ;
And still observing him, our country's boast,
Victorious general of Judah's host,
Call him the chosen type, from sacred word,
Of Israel's Redeemer, Christ the Lord !
And doubly we our hearts exulting raise
In joyful hopes, and canticles of praise,
The tribe of Judah we, which true alone,
Save Benjamin, remained around the throne
Of Reoboam, true, though erring, king.
The other tribes their Jeroboam would bring
To judge his Lord, and then his crown assail,
Exclaiming, 'To your tent, Oh Israel !'
Alas ! for those ten tribes, where are they fled ?
Dispersed, and hidden as the silent dead !
Whilst we, the children of the loyal two,
Do claim Messiah, as our Father's due ;
A claim, perchance, we soon may joyful make,
Oh ! may he own it, for his servants' sake."

“What, then,” cried Joseph, an ingenuous youth,
Of lofty musings, innocence, and truth,
What are the signs by which our sons may say
We have been born to see Messiah’s day ?”
“Thou, who art young,” replied the elder friend,
“Thyself may see this glory without end.”
“Oh !” cried the youth, “if I may hope to see
The Anointed One, his subject true to be ;
If in my hoary age, before I fail,
The royal babe within my arms I hail,
God will I praise, who having this regard
To all our fathers, gives me their reward.”
The elder said, “We first must subject be,
From Dan to Beersheba, from East to sea.
A foreign yoke must gall our nation’s pride ;
The Romans this have done, and yet, beside,
There must be general peace, not only here,
But through all lands the Roman armies fear.
About this time, we must be keen to trace
Amidst our maidens, of King David’s race,
Such indications of a virtue fair—
Such heavenly gifts—such beauty, pure and rare,
As may denote the Virgin, Prophets’ sing.
The chosen maid, the Mother of our King !”

“Surely,” said one, “will God his power declare,
And grant us signs on earth, and in the air ;
Elias will return, and loud proclaim

The Virgin's habitation, and her name.
The peace, which Rome has made by force of might,
Shall broken be to vindicate our right ;
Such mockery of peace shall Christ deride,
And reign triumphant monarch o'er their pride."
A fourth observed " Yes ; surely he will reign,
But *how* we know not ; let us then refrain
From diving into counsel dread and high,
Counsel Divine, of awful majesty !"
" But we must watch," returned the other Jew,
" And mark each token, marvellous as true ;
We know enough to hail our nation's boast,
Greater than Moses over Pharaoh's host,
Mightier than Joshua, when the trumpet's sound
Levelled the walls of Jero to the ground ;
Happier than David, He will blessings bring,
In three-fold measure, Prophet, Priest, and King !
The antitype of Solomon the great,
Endless in wisdom, dignity, and state ;
Surpassing Maccabeus, he shall free
His people through a blest eternity !"

" Most true," said Joachim, with pensive air,
" But still our latest prophets both declare
Such desolation in our city's heart,
Such desecration of her sacred part,
Her Temple left with every gate unclosed,
The Holy e'en of Holies left exposed,

Profaned the altar where the victims lie
By sacrilege of such iniquity,
That only words terrific to the ear—
'Abomination,' 'Desolation,' 'Fear'—
Our prophet Daniel cries: Oseà too
Responds the tidings mournful, nigh, and true.
An elder cried, with anger scarce restrained,
"These words are too obscure to be explained,
And too remote the time. Christ will remain."
"And yet," said Joachim, "shall Christ be slain!
Denied by 'people' who are His no more,
Lo! see a Leader and his people pour
Within the holy city—'midst our joy
This prophecy may well our thoughts employ."
For Israel shall mourn, without a king,
With none to sacrifice or praise to sing,
Without an ephod or a theraphim,
Our cup of sorrow rises to the brim!"

While thus discoursed the elders of the tribe,
The pious youths endeavoured to imbibe
The sentiments of those they ever deemed
Men of research and prayer, and never dreamed
That such as these, in disappointed pride,
Could ever set their cherished hopes aside.
Oh God! we think of Jews as something made
Extraneous from the human race, and laid,
Without a heart to feel or head to think,

Within some mould, debarred the inward link
Of sympathy to other kindly men,
Deaf to their prophet's voice and hallowed pen.
Go ! let us smite on our own breasts and say,
"To *me*, Oh Lord ! be merciful this day ;"
To me, who, in the nineteenth century,
Am still so far from true humility.
Who still can love the triumph of the world,
The pride of birth, the emblazoned scroll unfurled,
Fame's loudest trumpet, and the swelling sound
Of lofty gratulation echoing round,
And still do never doubt *we* should have seen
Messiah in the Saviour's humble mien,
And, through all splendid prophecies, descried
The Man of Sorrows—Jesus crucified !



CANTO II.

BOWER OF THE WOMEN OF DAVID'S LINE—ANNA, WIFE OF
JOACHIM—CONCLUSION OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.
—JOACHIM AND ANNA GO UP TO JERUSALEM—THEIR
SEPARATE VOW.

WHILE such discourse was held by their high lords,
The daughters of the royal line their boards
Of festive entertainment held aside,
Secluded in their state of bashful pride.
Beauteous their bower, yet not so rich and rare
As with these living flowers to compare.
Or shall we call their bower an aviary
For every dulcet note beneath the sky,
Where few were listeners, each her tale must tell
In liquid tones, and doubtless told it well ?
While nothing could exceed in that fair throng
The sweet confusion of their various song !
And yet beneath this lightsome, graceful play,
A deeper stream of thought and feeling lay ;
And these gay beauties, in the perilous hour,
Could bring a Judith's and a Deborah's power,
And oftener still the woman's treasured part

Of kind and tender sympathy of heart.
But still one keenest interest and theme
E'er formed the daily prayer and nightly dream,
In which each gloried to excel the rest,
And boasted of the joy that filled her breast,
Both fame and gratitude her sure reward ;
This was the birth of children to her Lord.

But who is she that pensive sits apart,
Thought on her brow and sorrow in her heart,
Whose eyes with tears unconsciously are dim ?
It is the childless wife of Joachim !
All that rebellious was in Anna's heart,
All that of morbid self-love had a part,
All sensibilities of wounded pride,
Had passed away ; to this world she had died.
In truth, what was there left for her, whom God
Had weaned from off the cherished land she trod,
Had made a by-word and a cause of fear
To former hearts, that once had held her dear ?
Although advanced in years, at every feast
Of nuptial greeting she was last and least,
And timorous brides and wives were loud in prayer
They might not suffer, though poor Anna was there,
While to each subtle taunt and bitter word
Anna would meekly answer, " 'Tis the Lord !"
But though all restless grief had passed away,
Deep in her breast a settled sorrow lay ;

The sorrow of the desolate, the life
Despised by man—a childless Jewish wife !
An outcast now, in fact as in idea,
From all the hopes and prospects of Judea.

Her venerable husband from his youth
Had blameless kept the law, in peace and truth.
The Scriptures his delight, to him was given
Deep penetration in the ways of heaven.
The depths of prophecy he well descried,
The two-fold meaning he by faith allied.
'Twas thence he hinted, in the festal bower,
The hidden meaning of Messiah's power,
But sought no more, in public, to define
The kingdom spiritual of Love Divine.
In silence, and in hope, he strength received,
And all the promises of God believed.
The bitter trial of his wedded life,
The desolation of his cherished wife,
In all its earth's vexations he had borne
Through twenty years of universal scorn ;
Unmoved in manly strength and self-respect,
Alike to him caresses or neglect.
But in its spiritual bearings Joachim
Suffered a martyrdom ! Cut off from Him,
The object of his only hope from youth,
The centre of his thoughts, the Source of Truth,
From Him who grace had given to fear and love,

In whom alone he felt to live and move.
Could it indeed be thus? Had God diffused
Within his servant's mind such grace, and yet
refused
To recognise his gifts? Had been his All,
Yet finally rejects the inspired call?
"Never!" exclaimed the fervent man of God;
"In surest hope I bow and kiss the rod.
One of two consolations shall be mine:
Either the fleshly tie will I resign,
In faith that I may spiritually
Welcome Messiah; or in constancy,
For offspring brave, and dutiful, and fair,
I still will raise my twenty years of prayer."

Throughout a week the Tabernacle Feast
In grateful joy was held, and when it ceased,
A pleasing record still within the breast
Remained of converse meet, that bore the test
Of times well spent. Now all prepare to part,
While some there are who look with heavy heart
On each sad withering branch and faded flowers,
And wish they could recal those festive hours,
Which, could they but secure in joy and mirth,
Their tabernacle they would fix on earth;
Happy for such when more than bowers prove
That heaven alone is fadeless for their love!
The multitudes disperse on every side

To seek their homes. With such will we abide
As journey to Jerusalem to pray,
A yearly visit all are bound to pay.
Among the pilgrims Joachim and Anne
Are thither bound, with each a holy plan.
They reach the city by the Fountain Gate,
And enter by the Royal Groves of state
And Fount of Siloa, and for that night
At their accustomed pilgrim house alight ;
To pure ablutions strict observance pay,
Then to their nation's glory wend their way.

Oh, Temple of Jerusalem ! what fame,
And beauty, and regret, cling round thy name !
Who can unmoved recal thy early day,
When thou alone couldst welcome crowds to pray ?
Yes ! thou wert perfect in thy rigid sphere,
Thy legal code, thy dynasty of fear ;
And viewing all thy structure, we may find
The temple spiritual of heart and mind ;
Thy deep foundations, laid in humble prayer,
To well support the building raised in air ;
Thy very stones, in form and quality,
Intrinsically pure, decreed on high ;
While solid walls in solemn silence rose,
Unmortared, and untouched by tools or blows ;
Thy outward courts frequented by the crowd,
Nation with nation meeting, clamourous, loud ;

While Jews alone thy inner courts possess,
And rightly to thy building have access.
Thy sanctuary, for the priests alone,
Thy altars of the sacrificial stone,
Thy veil excluding e'en the annointed, save
The annual high priest, deep, awful, grave.
Holy of Holies ! Ah ! may we then dare
With thee our inmost spirit to compare ?
Yes ! there are moments when our souls become
Holiest of holies ! when the Treasured One,
Our Covenant, is resting in our ark.
Ah ! golden moments ! then no longer dark,
No longer lonely we the veil can close,
For truly He who light and food bestows,
Our Mystic Candlestick, our true Shew Bread,
Our All, is with us ; what then can we dread ?
What then the sight of even holy things ?
What then the joy which human solace brings ?
The outward courts our senses may employ,
But here our spirit dwells in perfect joy !

Arrived within the Temple's inner court,
From Anna parted, Joachim now sought
To pass through all the crowd of victims there
With offering meet, and gain the inner stair.
But having reached where stood the appointed
priest,
And humbly waited till the rest had ceased,

Conceive his anguish when, with bitter word,
His offering was rejected from the Lord!
"Go! sinful man, cut off from every share
Of Judah's hopes, why dost thou here repair?
Thy gift is useless. Go! lament thy fate.
In distance keep, nor pass the Temple gate."
Not daring to contend, the saint withdrew
Within a deep recess, concealed from view,
Where fresh in earnestness, and sorrow now,
His promises to God he sealed by vow.
"Oh! Great Adonai, God of hope and truth,
In whom alone I trusted from my youth,
Reject me not when hoary years are nigh,
But grant that I may praise eternally.
Remove from Anna this reproach and scorn,
Permit that to mine age a child be born.
And in return, accept thine own bequest:
Take, Lord, the infant, treasure of my breast!
For here I vow that, three years after birth,
In this Thy Temple, wonder of the earth,
Where only is adored Thy truth divine,
My child I dedicate before Thy shrine."
This vowed with impulse from his inmost heart,
The saint arose and hastened to depart.
But passing through the porch, a Pharisee,
Who knew him well, thus spoke in secret glee:
"Good Joachim, you know me for your friend;
In every grief I fain would succour lend,

But here your case is one of desperate kind ;
Mistrust your hopes, self-love is ever blind.
Can you become, like me, the sire
Of son and grandson ? Would you thus aspire
To be an ancestor in great Messiah's race ?
All cannot thus be blest ; some must give place.
Your parents' sin, or yours, has brought this curse.
God help you, friend ; a case could scarce be
worse.

And that poor woman, Anna, brooks she well
This dire disgrace ? Ha ! surely I may tell :
Your face speaks volumes ! Tell her, though,
that I,
I, the elect of God, have heaved a sigh
On her sad reprobation. Fare ye well !
To evening prayer now sounds the Temple bell."

Within the Temple, in the female part,
Pouring with tears the sorrows of her heart,
Anna received the inspiration now,
Like Joachim, to bind herself by vow.
She thought of Anna, matron famed of yore,
Who, childless, sought her Maker to implore,
And who received, in answer to her word,
The holy Samuel, prophet of the Lord ;
And parted from her infant, loved and fair,
In votive offering, to Heli's care.
"Ah !" cried our Anna, "high example this.
Like her I'll vow, like her I'll wait for bliss,

And lose the sunbeam of mine infant's smile,
Caresses sweet, which might my hours beguile,
His dawning reason and his artless play,
His strengthening footsteps and his prattle gay.
I will relinquish him to God, who can
Return the child at length to me—a man,
The solace of our hoary age, the sire
Of offspring numerous as our desire.
Yet better still to make the offering free,
And leave my God the arbiter to be.”
This inspiration, Anna, is from heaven ;
Give freely, and to thee 'll be freely given !



CANTO III.

THE ABODE OF DEPARTED SPIRITS—ADAM AND EVE—THE
STAIN OF ORIGINAL SIN ON EVERY SOUL—THE SUBLIME
SCHEME OF REDEMPTION—THE SOUL OF MARY—HYMN
SUNG IN LIMBO—EVE'S PROPHECY—ADAM'S PROPHECY.

Now, with our guardian angels, unrestrained
We take our flight, where holy souls detained
From heaven, await in hope and long desire
Him who shall burst their prison gates of fire.
Christ, who alone a guilty world can save,
Christ, the expected First Fruit from the grave,
Will all His destined course fulfil on earth,
And then arrive to give them second birth.
Long course of ages those before the Flood
Have waited for the Mediator's Blood !
In hope deferred and grateful patience they
Remain in prayer incessant for that day.
Now turn we where our primal parents wait,
Bearing the semblance of their mortal state.
And gaze we on their fallen majesty
With pitying respect and filial sigh.
On them, as on each soul in that wide space,

Is seen the blot on innocence and grace ;
Although forgiven and long accepted, still
There rests the taint of first delight in ill ;
On them more evident than on the rest,
Who but inherited the curse possessed.
They, sad originators of the woe
On all around them as on all below.
Not all the penitence and all the tears
Which followed through their length of mortal
 years,
Not all the centuries, in countless shower
Of moments tedious, since that darkened hour,
In length and value ever could efface
The insult to their God, their own disgrace.
No ! the repairer of an injury
Must to the injured party equal be.
Who, then, but God could this, His cause, defend ?
What equal to His power could pretend ?
And who but man should suffer punishment
For man's offence, and by his own consent ?
From this necessity that wondrous scheme--
A God made Man, creation to redeem !
Made Man, but still the God of purity ;
To *sinful* flesh He never could ally !
And therefore it was meet he should prepare
A Mother pure, and innocent, and fair ;
Form, as it were, " new heavens and new earth,"
Wherein to dwell before the Almighty Birth.

A woman first transgressed, and now we see
Forth from the bosom of the Trinity,
When all events in their due course were wreathed,
God's pure precursor, Mary's soul, was breathed !

The twilight of that disembodied place
Where still the parents of the human race,
With all their tarnished children, must await
The course of earth's events to change their state,
Is now enlightened by a Morning Star,
Which well they know to be Day's Harbinger,
And all burst forth in sacred hymns of praise
For this new era in their lengthened days.
Antediluvians, those too from the Flood,
And those extraneous of the call, yet good ;
But more the children of the Sovereign choice,
Patriarchs and prophets, raised the exulting voice.

HYMN.

Hail ! sinless soul, the first we see
Without the fatal stain of ill ;
Thou only privileged to be
The essence of thy Maker's will.

Thou whom the Canticle of Love
Foretells in mystery,
In strains inspired from above,
"There is no spot in thee."

Speed on ! Thy embryo form awaits
The quickening of thy Spirit,
Made pure like thee, in all its state
High favour to inherit.

“ Sweet Garden,” which the Eternal King
Has chosen for his own,
To which fresh graces He will bring,
Enclosed for him alone.

New Mother of the human race,
In truth as in idea,
Yet ever Virgin full of grace,
“ Sealed Fountain ” of Judea !

“ Ah ! ” cried repentant Eva, “ thus *my* soul
Was spotless once ; unconscious sweet controul
Of innocence ! but fatal vanity,
And proud ambition, curiosity,
And disobedient, rebel appetite,
Brought sin to curse the world with fearful might,
And death in punishment, while she alone
Whom God has chosen in my stead to own,
The Mother spiritual of all the earth,
Pure in her soul and body ere her birth,
Will bring once more, my errors to efface,
A perfect model to the human race.
Ever obedient, silent, humble, meek,

The elect will fondly her example seek,
And prudently a warning take from me,
A wilful Vashti I, an Esther she,
E'en while in innocence I may not dare
My state with hers, most lofty, to compare ;
Nothing of sin or guilt I understood,
But hers will be the constant *choice* of good.
Two consequences, though, will time reveal
To her of sin ; these, sinless, will she feel—
Sorrow and death ! Alas ! my spirit dies,
Unhappy Eve ! till He the Christ shall rise,
He who was promised me in that dark hour
Of my transgression and of Satan's power ;
He who shall crush the wily Serpent's head,
My seed, through her accepted in my stead."

While other's praises thus, and her own blame,
Eva announced, the pure and vestal flame
Of Mary's soul passed swiftly on its way,
And soon was lost to sight, while fitly they
Of Limbo were consoled to find their sphere
Illumined by the track that spirit clear
Had made on their horizon, like the morn,
When softly breaking o'er a night forlorn.
And now our Father Adam thus began
To raise his voice prophetic, and the plan
Of our redemption and his own to sing,
As erst Isaiah and the Prophet King,

But with an eye that compassed all the earth,
To whom the course of ages and the birth
And fall of empires were as only part
Of that great scheme which ever in his heart
Reigned paramount—the glory of his God.
And never when in Paradise he trod
More happiness had known, without alloy,
Than thrilled his long repentant soul with joy.

HYMN.

The time will come, I hear the sound,
I see the light on holy ground,
Mid incense cloud ;
The light is blessed by holy word,
The emblematic name is heard,
Thrice uttered loud—

“The Light of Christ!” And hark! I hear
My uttered name, distinct and clear ;
And now they sing,
“Ah! happy fault!” which did demand
That grasp of the Almighty Hand
To rescue bring.

Great was the sin, but greater still
The reparation, which His Will
Has made for man ;

And therefore let us ever sing
"Ah! happy fault!" till echoes ring
The Almighty plan!

Not in Jerusalem that scene—
Alas! Jerusalem, I ween,
The prophets' home,
Will then have yielded, in disgrace,
To one more blest and faithful place—
To Christian Rome!

Yes! Adam, Eve, Jerusalem,
Have dared God's favour to contemn;
And there shall come
A city and a mystic race,
From those to whom we yield the place—
Christ—Mary—Rome!



CANTO IV.

BIRTH OF SAINT MARY—ANNA'S CONVICTIONS—JOACHIM'S
DOUBTS—MARY'S INFANCY—HER PRESENTATION IN THE
TEMPLE.

HYMN ON THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

ANGELS' glowing wings descending,
Softest strains harmonious blending,
Come in glorious ray,
All to hail this "Morning Star,"
Brighter than yon planet far,
Harbinger of day.

Long foretold by Judah's seer,
"Virgin" of that vision clear
Blindly Jews receive ;
Daughter of their line of kings,
Whence the hoped Messiah springs,
Fondly we believe.

Every blessing in this hour
Comes in free ethereal shower
On the babe of grace ;
Formed by God's eternal will
Of prophets, saints, and angels, still
To hold the highest place.

After long trial, doubtings, and alarms,
Anna, transported, clasps within her arms
Her votive babe ! and in her grateful joy
Heeds not that she had hoped and wished a boy.
A child in answer to her vow is given,
And if a girl, it is the will of Heaven.
This acquiescence gained for Anna more
Of hidden inspiration, to explore
The mystery deep of this precursive birth,
To Christ's expected advent on the earth.
Yet, humbly diffident, she ventured not
To question Joachim on their blest lot.
"Perchance," thought she, "my husband knows
still more,
For God has gifted him with sacred lore,
And power of meditation deep and high,
On every hallowed type and mystery.
In trembling joy I then within my breast
Will guard the secret, God will do the rest."
But God oft looks upon the weaker mind,
To send His consolations prompt and kind,

While to the stronger He withholds all aid
Beyond the means His Providence has made.
Thus Anne alone had heard the internal voice,
Saying, "This is the Virgin of my choice!"

The infant thrived, and grew in beauty rare,
To which her graces only might compare,
And Anna, pondering on her destiny,
Felt that she touched her reverentially;
And now besought the Lord in prayer, to know
Whether the favours great He would bestow
Should be imparted to this pre-ordained,
That fitly to her station she be trained?
But Anne received for answer not to state
The glories high which did the child await.
Yet not alone the mother knew, unsought,
The infant's commune with the heavenly court.
The father watched his lovely child at play,
Then clasped his hands, to work no more that day.
She seemed alone, and yet was proved to be,
By looks and smiles, in gentle company.
And suddenly she held a garland fair
Of flowers she had not gathered, then in air
Upraised to where the young birds cradled high,
Which feared her not, warbling precociously,
And taking their first flight around their queen,
Followed where Joachim rejoiced unseen.
And she too sang her little hymn of joy,

That sinless child, in praise without alloy.

“Who art thou?” he exclaimed, then, lost in thought.

“Never has Judah known, or prophet taught,
Of female child thus honoured and caressed.

Never! said I? Yes; in my secret breast
Recurr the oft repudiated thought,

The hope presumptuous, tempting me unsought,
That now the destined time is nigh at hand,

So long expected, prayed for, through the land,
When midst our royal daughters shall arise

That Morning Star, that herald of the skies,
Whose life shall guarantee our victory won,

‘A virgin shall conceive and bear a son!’

Forgive me, great Eloim! God above!

Shall I presume, in my paternal love,

To penetrate thy counsels? Shall I trace

The great Messiah to my immediate race!

Ah! what presumption! Spare me, spare thy
rod!

Would I become the grandsire of my God?”

The saint these conflicts strictly kept apart,

Fearing to mar the peace of Anna’s heart,

And shunned all explanation with his wife

Relating to this blessing of their life.

Yet often doubted whether he alone

Had marked the wonders which in Mary shone;

There beamed a peaceful joy within that child,
Her constant silence was so wrapt and mild ;
The tears she shed, if for another's woe,
Or if for sin they told her reigned below,
Seemed ever fraught with hope, and by her air
'Twas hope Divine infused in every prayer,
While then still more conspicuously was seen
Her mingled strength and tenderness of mien.
No sorrow had she known, her life below
All love and tenderness ; the future woe
Of her high destinies concealed awhile,
Mary's young life was God's paternal smile.
But ah ! how swiftly pass these first three years !
How soon must dawn the day of sighs and tears !
A few short months, and their new happiness
Will yield to desolation and distress :
A desolation those can feel in part
Who've lost the dearest treasure of their heart !
True they were not to bury in the tomb
Their lovely babe, in earliest opening bloom ;
They were to offer her, in faith divine,
Before the Temple's safe and holy shrine,
And truth and honour bade them hasten now
To gratefully fulfil their mutual vow.
Still nature bade them yearn towards their child,
And Joachim, though resolute as mild,
Could not unmoved recal the tender past,
Or give caresses that might be the last ;

Towards Anna great was his concern and care,
For she must grieve, he thought, in twofold share.
And as they left their peaceful dwelling place,
His admiration heightened at the grace
Of hope and strength which led her through the
day
When first they started on their given way,
And which enabled her all tears to stem
Throughout the journey to Jerusalem !

Enclosed within the Temple's hallowed court,
Secluded from the world, devoutly sought
By those who loved the service of the Lord,
Stood the appropriated Female Ward,
A range of goodly rooms, where might be seen
Widows, of chastened thoughts and lowly mien,
Employed in silent works of pious use,
In spirit poor, in alms alone diffuse ;
Submissive to the High Priest's honoured word,
From prompt obedience never had they swerved,
And in community endeavoured each
To give the loving eye and gentle speech.
Another Anna, much beloved of heaven,
To fasting and to prayer devoutly given,
Serving the holy Temple day and night,
Esteemed by all the rest their brightest light,
Was placed at this time in maternal care
Of those young dedicated beings fair,

'Those offerings by pious parents made,
To shelter 'neath the Temple's hallowed shade,
Until the age when they should each be given
In holy bonds to one approved by Heaven.
The first-born daughters chiefly sought this place,
Of royal and of sacerdotal race.

When Solomon the King transferred the Ark
Of ancient law, as we may read and mark,
From Sion's Mount, within its destined shrine,
The Temple, ordered by the Voice Divine,
The dulcimer and harp, with trumpet sound
And cymbals, echoed on the holy ground,
While incense rose in purifying cloud,
And canticles of joy were sung aloud,
Although the covenant it bore within
Was stern denouncer, not the cure of sin,
And blood of victims on the altar flowed ;
Such was the welcome on that Ark bestowed.
A joy contrasted by the ignorance
In which the city lay at the advance,
Silent and humble, of the destined ark
Of our New Covenant ! None could remark,
Except by special inward grace and light,
That more was passing than a pleasing sight :
A family on pious pilgrimage,
With many kinsmen grave and matrons sage,
While Mary, the true ark of heavenly charms,
Was meekly carried in her mother's arms,

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But companies of angels circled round,
And led the antitype to holy ground.

HYMN ON THE PRESENTATION.

Lovely child, so softly blooming,
Perfect in thy form and face,
With thine air so unassuming,
Yet all dignity and grace.

Still an infant, canst thou sever
From thy holy parents' love ?
Wilt thou not at least endeavour
To revisit their abode ?

No ! the choice which grace inspires
Raises thee above thy years,
And by pure and hidden fires
Dries the flow of childhood's tears.

Now a maiden in the Temple,
Subject to the Jewish priest,
How attractive thy example,
Seeking to be last and least.

And in holy silence musing
On that "Virgin" Prophet's own,
Quite unconsciously then choosing
Her poor handmaid to become.

And inspired to be that "Fountain
Sealed" to all but God alone,
Thou dost vow, on Zion's mountain,
What no Jewish maid hath done.

With countenance and manner grave and mild,
The venerable Simeon blessed the Child
With warmth unusual, though still ignorant
Who was this lovely infant aspirant.
Nor saw her destiny till after time
Revealed her lot, transcendently sublime,
And then permitted him to see in part
The sword of grief that must transfix her heart.
Her little hand the blessed Infant gave,
And then with gentleness began to crave
Leave to obtain, before she sought her cell,
Her parents' blessing and a last farewell.
This granted instantly, the holy child,
With manner wrapt and more than reconciled,
Knelt and received the benediction fond,
And after one embrace, the tender bond
Of purest earthly love was loosed awhile,
And her last look was with seraphic smile !
Ascending then the fifteen steps which led
Towards her future home, without a dread,
Or sigh, or backward glance on those below,
With thoughtful air and step devoutly slow,
The little Mary, with the priests around,
The portal entered of the hallowed ground.

CANTO V.

TYPICAL FEAST OF THE EMISSARY GOAT—JOACHIM AND ANNA
RETURN TO NAZARETH—JOACHIM'S VISION AND DEATH—
ANNA'S ABODE IN THE TEMPLE—SHE IS APPOINTED TO
INSTRUCT HER DAUGHTER—ANNA'S DEATH—DESCRIP-
TION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN—HER VOW.

MUCH influx from the towns and pious stir,
In preparation for the feast each year,
Now filled the city. Obligation due
From every privileged and grateful Jew,
Like Sabbath was it kept, in holy rest,
And each one laboured to discharge his breast
In sighs and tears, afflicting thus his soul,
With promise of reform and self-controul,
Until, when mitred and with linen coat,
The high priest o'er the emissary goat
In expiatory power now laid his hand,
Transferring thus the sin of all the land,
And praying, in extremity of need,
That on it might alight each word and deed
Of Israel's iniquity. Behold !
Guiltless itself, to others' misery sold,

Forth to the desert charged with sin it ran,
An outcast typical from God and man !

Well suited to this feast of awful thought
The minds which Joachim and Anna brought.
Subdued by the bereavement they had made,
And ever pious, fervently they prayed ;
Discerning too, in part, by musings high,
The hidden antitype in mystery.
The solemn feast concluded, they return,
With friends who sympathise in their concern,
To Nazareth, their home, and on their way
Are cheered with social converse, grave and gay,
But chiefly by the filial care of one
Whom they have long regarded as their Son.
Their cousin he and neighbour, yet far more
Than neighbour local, for in him they saw
All virtues perfecting from early youth,
And hoped he might become their son in truth,
Trusting they had, albeit his age matured,
In this their daughter's happiness secured.

Brief time had Joachim on this to dwell,
Six moons alone when he was strong and well ;
And sinking now, on bed of death he lies,
His watchful Anna by, to close his eyes.
“ I may not live,” he cried, “ to see her grow
From infancy, and like a flower to blow

From bud of promise unto Sharon's rose,
And watch the circling hours, to fresh disclose
Sweet virtue fragrant, breathing all around,
Like scented lily raised on holy ground.
I may not live to bless, within her arms,
A Son, inheriting his Mother's charms.
Down to the lonely grave I darkly sink,
Without her hand to clasp me on the brink,
Her voice to utter 'Father!' in mine ear,
Her angel smile my failing heart to cheer.
Did I do well, when soon to leave this earth,
To bring my heaven down by her sweet birth,
And urging God my patience to deceive,
By granting more than I can bear to leave?
Still I believed my motive to be pure.
The scorn of men 'twas easy to endure;
I asked, in hope, my God alone to praise,
Yet made an idol in my latter days!"

While the poor Father thus desired to live,
Anna withdrew, their daily alms to give;
And in her absence Joachim, alone,
Poured forth without restraint his piteous moan,
Not only for the joy he left behind,
But grieving he should sin in heart and mind;
By this repugnance showing little faith,
For God disposes best in life or death.
When suddenly, to cheer his languid sight,

An angel stood, in purest garment bright,
And with majestic and sonorous tones,
Bade him immediate cease his present groans :
“ Servant of God, why doth thy spirit grieve ?
Why mourns thy soul that little child to leave ?
She needeth not thy care. And lo ! the Lord
Hath sent to comfort thee, with gracious word,
That she, for whose dear sake thou wouldst arouse,
Chosen He hath for daughter and for spouse,
And in due course from her will take His birth,
His only tie, His Mother, on the earth.
His Mother, who, thus blest while time shall be,
Will, when it merges in eternity,
At his right hand the Queen of Heaven become,
His Daughter, Spouse, and Mother, three in one !
And thou art sent ambassador to those
Who merit tiding such as I disclose ;
Those holy souls who have desired long
To grateful join in the exulting song,
In Alleluias for deliverance nigh,
And entrance to the glories of the sky.
Go ! in the favour of the Lord’s behest,
In Abraham’s bosom share thy father’s rest ;
There hope in peace, for soon Messiah’s light
Will dawn, thy faith and patience to requite.
His ancestor on earth, to thee is given
The Son of Mary, who is King of Heaven ! ”

“God of my life and only hope in death!
Oh! let me praise Thee with my latest breath,”
Exclaimed the saint. “Thou messenger of bliss,
Blessed be thou for tidings such as this.
Anna, return. Why dost thou gaze on me?
Yes! I am blest. Dost thou yon angel see?
I leave thee now without a pang or sigh.
He beckons me. Farewell awhile! I die!”
With placid smile the aged saint departs;
This separation of two faithful hearts
Was gently felt, for soon they would unite
For ever in their loved Redeemer’s sight.

The widowed Anna, in her lonely home,
Thought on the past, but more on days to come,
And God besought that soon she might deserve
Within the Temple Him alone to serve.
While thus she prayed, behold a message kind
From those recluses who, with heart and mind,
Had dedicated all their future days
To God, their Maker’s service, and his praise;
And gratefully did Anna then reply
That with them she would hope to live and die.
Bidding farewell where Joachim now lay,
She towards the holy city bent her way.
Throughout the journey Anne rejoiced in heart,
And blessed the Lord that, being called apart
From all the bustling emptiness of life,

And e'en the sacred duties of a wife,
She might pursue and watch, with some restraint,
The infant footsteps of her little saint ;
And if by discipline still kept aloof,
Yet both would be beneath the hallowed roof ;
And Anna claimed, as all she could desire,
To hear her seraph's voice in youthful choir.
And sometimes, on the festivals of praise,
To see this treasure of her latter days.
For little did the pious matron deem
Her value high in every priest's esteem,
And she their choice to be instructress wise
Of her she had resigned in sacrifice !
Yet thus it was, and Mary's earthly lore
Was chiefly from her mother's sacred store :
Though Anna marked the gifts which God had
 given,
His future spouse to grace, meet Queen of Heaven,
And much admired the great restraint of speech
With which *she* listened who could better teach ;
A rare humility, and blest as rare,
For none in this with Mary may compare !
And often was the secret of the Lord
O'er Anna's lips in some spontaneous word,
But checked each time by strong controuling
 power,
She dared not to advance the destined hour
By seeking to reveal the wondrous tale,

Such indiscretion long she might bewail.
Thus nine years passed, and when at length in
death
The duteous child received her parting breath,
Not then from Anna's knowledge aught could
spring;
She bore away the secret of the King.
For Mary's destiny, so great, so high,
Must be revealed by angel embassy.

Just thirteen years had Mary's childhood
wreathed,
And ne'er had beauty so angelic breathed.
Her slender form in woman's perfect mould,
Her hazel eyes, which wrapt devotion told,
With long dark lashes on her damask cheek,
Her richly plaited hair, her aspect meek,
With calmly thoughtful brow and smile of peace
From lips whose purity would never cease;
This was the outward aspect of that shrine
Destined to bear the Mystery Divine,
The Second Adam, God, in human birth!
Who willed her thus, sweet mother of the earth!
At this young age, when, in the eastern clime,
The female heart begins to find it time
To love and to be loved in earthly bowers,
And fondly learns the language of the flowers,
Yearning for happiness she thinks to find

In sympathetic intercourse of mind,
And those sweet ties, by God Himself ordained,
But which so many cherish unrestrained ;
'Twas thus, in all her charms of early bloom,
She vowed to dedicate, until the tomb,
Her virgin state to God, and never know
The love of fellow mortal here below !
This wondrous inspiration from above,
She hidden kept, in holy fear and love ;
Around she could perceive no human aid,
That she, of royal race, should live a maid.
Far otherwise, she knew, the fixed intent
Of those with whom her early days were spent ;
Who to her parents' memory thought it due
Their wishes to fulfil in all they knew.
Hence scarcely would elapse another year,
When he, whom they had chosen, would appear :
And Mary's only trust was in the Lord,
To change events by His Almighty Word.



CANTO VI.

JOSEPH MIRACULOUSLY CHOSEN—HIS ESPOUSALS TO THE
BLESSED VIRGIN—SHE DECLARES HER VOW—THE AN-
NUNCIATION OF THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL—MARY'S
NUPTIALS WITH GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

JOSEPH of Nazareth had not become
The only one in seeking for his home
The beautiful and saintly maid, whose choice,
He hoped, was guided by her parents' voice ;
Many there were who wished, but dared not raise
Their hopes so high, and thought it rash to gaze
On charms which awed them, while still many more
Besiege the holy Simeon to implore
A favourable hearing of their claims,
Which no humility or sense restrains.
In solemn dignity he bids them wait
Till God shall signify the maiden's fate.
At length the priestly guardian, after prayer,
Within the Temple bade them to repair,
With each a barren stem, when he proclaimed
That whoso's branch should bud, his God had
named.

All hearts beat high, while eager looks are turned
Around the stems, and with resentment lurned
When, after some delay, in silent prayer,
One only branch, among the many there,
Was seen, by hidden and mysterious power,
To blossom forth, in lily's purest flower.
That branch was Joseph's! Meekly did he stand
Whom God had thus distinguished through the
land!

Now Simeon sought apart the sacred prize,
Who thus had favour found in many eyes,
And briefly, yet with tenderness, declared,
Although with her good parents he had shared
In rendering honour and esteem where due,
And Joseph they had ever held in view,
That yet from deference to the Almighty's Will,
He had desired proof of virtue still.
Imparting to the trembling maiden's ear
The fact which overwhelmed her heart with fear;
Yet gathering strength from aspirations made,
Mary declared her vow, then softly prayed.
"My child," said Simeon, "prophets ne'er relate
That maidens should desire to choose a fate
Which Jephtha's daughter had to undergo.
Rash vow! which plunged her sire deep in woe,
And which would banish her alone on earth,
Without a share in great Messiah's birth.

'Tis true the mightiest of all will come
Of virgin pure, of her alone the Son.
But such aspiring thoughts are far from thee;
Happy if thou *her* simple handmaid be,
And this thou hast declared to me apart,
In confidence revealing all thy heart."
Mary replied, "'Tis true I think upon
The chosen Mother of the anointed Son.
My highest wish on earth, indeed, would be
This virgin lady pure to serve and see.
Her bright example, I have trusted, might
Induce my guardians all to deem it right,
And e'en to urge that lowlier maidens ought
To watch in virgin state, to form her court.
May we not hope she ever will reside
Within this Temple? Let me then abide
Where, infant yet, I earnest prayed the Lord
This signal bliss and favour to accord?"
Simeon replied, "Perfection is to choose
What God has chosen, nor His will refuse.
In prompt obedience, then, accept his choice,
Declared to thee by my appointed voice,
In humble duty reconcile thy mind
A wife to be, submissive, faithful, kind.
In fact, to be another Anna, where
Thy mother lived, and soon in faith prepare
To find, with heart contented, grateful, free,
A home in Nazareth, of Galilee!"

In conscious worth, with dignity and awe,
Thus spake the high priest of the ancient law.

Oh! blessed Mary, saintliest of the saints,
Whom not a shade of imperfection taints,
How deeply hast thou felt what 'tis to seek
The hidden will of God in patience meek,
When He, to prove our faith, in darkest night
Sends cloud on cloud, without a ray of light,
Compelled to follow where obedience leads,
Because that virtue never vainly pleads;
While yet, each former inspiration given,
Flashes across the gloom in rays from heaven,
To show, as if too late, the hope of years
Preserved through dangers, persecutions, tears!

All now proceeded to the nuptial rite,
While, strong in faith and lovely to the sight,
Mary received and gave the outward sign
Of plighted troth, invoking aid divine.
That aid was given, and Joseph felt with awe
To venerate alone the charms he saw.
Content the humble guardian to become,
He feared still more, as he approached his home,
Ozias' fate to share, as prompt as dark,
Should he presumptuously but touch that ark;
This reverence increased each circling hour,
Till he acknowledged supernatural power.

While Joseph pondered o'er these feelings given,
Mary revealed the vow she made to heaven,
And sweet in dignity and mild intreat,
Declared her willingness, in all things meet,
To humbly serve, to honour, and obey,
But that no more within her power lay,
For e'en from infancy her only love
Had been the One Invisible—Above !
Thus spake the maiden, while a holy power
Of brightness shone around her in that hour,
And Joseph felt all earthly feeling hush,
Like Moses gazing on the burning bush !
And yet from Joseph's chaste and faithful heart
The secret still was hidden of the part
Assigned by Heaven to this his virgin wife:
For though through all his meditative life
He well had known Isaiah's prophecy,
And deemed the time to be approaching nigh,
Yet still the function of the marriage rite,
And home domestic, served to blind his sight.
Thus God decreed, and also rich reward ;
For many virtues were, with one accord,
Tried most severely by this ignorance,
As fresh events in awful steps advance.

'Twas now the fragrant time of early spring,
When feathered choristers their welcome sing,
And tender shoots and eager buds are seen

To burst their trammels in the purest green,
While distant sounds of rural life are heard
To gladden, like the flow'ret and the bird,
And youthful hearts expand, in earthly hope
Of novel scenes and pleasure's wider scope.
Yet Mary, faithful to her destined home,
Nor sought for guests, nor yet abroad to roam ;
But found, in every earthly favour given,
Another means to raise her heart to heaven :
If means could e'er be wanted by that heart,
Which free from human passions lived apart:
A temple pure, which silently received
Increase of grace beyond all yet conceived.
Embracing labour as the lot of man,
She graceful serves the humble artisan ;
All perfect she in holy fear and love,
And therefore on her duties from above
Was cast a halo of divinity,
The hidden touch electric from the sky.
These duties ended, Mary's heart would spring
To more immediate converse with her king.

In these her early days of youthful bloom
She chiefly loved, within a private room,
Unseen, in silence wrapt, to haply hear
Within her breast the unuttered sentence clear,
Which none but He can give, when every word
Remains as if imprinted by the sword,

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And yet so calmly traced in hidden strength,
So durable through memory's utmost length,
As if the heart in substance were of stone,
Which He had stood with parting step upon,
Like to the rock which bears the impress given,
In pledge of His ascension into heaven.
And sometimes Mary would reply in prayer,
Or praises vocal, yet were these more rare,
In this still hour, than blissful closed eye,
And silent lips apart, in gentle sigh.
Such happiness, if haply it increase
Without support, her mortal life must cease.
In rapture thus apart—unseen—alone,
Absorbed in God—a light around her shone,
Exterior from the vision of the mind,
When all her dormant senses roused to find
An angel—so she hoped—who drawing nigh,
Thus visited her now in mystery.
With reverence she turned—but 'twas to see,
Herself revered, with lowly bended knee :
While earnest gazing on her downcast face,
The stranger uttered, "Hail ! thou full of grace,
The Lord is with thee. Of all womankind
Art thou supremely blest."—Then deep in mind,
Mary revolved these praises, far beyond
The all she e'er had heard from parents fond,
Or spouse admiring. Trembling at his word,
And filled with holy prudence from the Lord,

She feared lest Satan, artful in his might
Had come, like angel, in a garb of light.
With sweet benignity the angel said,
Observing her, "Oh, Mary! do not dread,
With God, thy Maker, favour hast thou won,
Behold thou shalt conceive, and bear a Son.
Jesus shall be his name. He shall be great;
The Son of God most high shall be His state.
His Father David's throne He shall obtain
From David's God, and He shall ever reign.
The tribes of the Anointed One shall blend,
And this His kingdom ne'er shall have an end."
Her vow preserving, Mary said, "How can
This e'er be done, because I know not man?"
Then spake the angel, answering, "On thee,
Descending swift, the Holy Ghost shall be,
The power creative soon shall hover nigh,
To over-shadow thee, of Him most high:
And thence the holy, which of thee shall spring,
The Son of God shall be, the Eternal King.
And take this sign to reassure thy heart,
Behold thy aged cousin now apart,
She who hath mourned her barrenness so long,
In three months' time will joy the tribes among.
Her pregnancy mysterious will show,
That nothing is impossible below;
For God, Creator, and primeval cause,
Who nature made, can alter nature's laws."

This heard, in grateful awe supremely felt,
Confirmed in humble duty, Mary knelt,
And said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
Be it to me according to thy word !
The Archangel Gabriel vanished—and the maid,
Predestined yet not forced to lend her aid
To this unprecedented act of love,
Which brought the Godhead from the throne above,
Received in raptured trance, the Almighty Power
Absorbing her, in that most glorious hour !

Spouse of the Holy Ghost ! our finite mind,
Cannot attain such nuptials, nor can find
Terms adequate to such a mystery.
Yet with thine aid, in feeble hope we try
To grasp the passing glimpses of a state,
Unknown before, or since ; so pure, so great,
So far transcending all that saints may prove,
Of raptured union, and of mystic love.
For more than mystic, more than rapture thine,
When then receivedst in truth the spouse divine.
And being one with Him, to thee was given,
The spousal right to be the Queen of Heaven !

CANTO VII.

THE VISITATION OF ST. MARY TO ELIZABETH—HISTORY OF
ZACHARY AND ELIZABETH—MAGNIFICAT—BIRTH OF JOHN
THE BAPTIST—SONG OF ZACHARY.

NOT in itself absorbed, the perfect heart
Desires by prayers, or action, to impart
Sweet solace spiritual in sympathy,
To all who claim in love a kindred tie.
Nay more—unbounded as the human race,
Expands in tender charity and grace
Towards all created beings. Thus we find
Our lady's gentle bosom, ever kind,
Filled with the generous thought sometime to spend
With Anna's aged relative and friend.
Who venerable, by her worth, and years,
Had much to tell of pious hopes and fears;
And doubly had Elizabeth a claim,
For Anna's trials long had been the same.
By God sore proved, yet much beloved by Him,
The wives of Zachary, and Joachim:
And Anna's holy daughter, ever meek,

With humble joy prepared her friend to seek ;
Exacting nothing of respect, and state,
Although exalted to a rank so great ;
Nor that her aged cousin first should come,
But makes the visitation to her home.
Inspired to this sweet charity, and more,
By Him, all charity, whom now she bore.
Joseph consents to be alone, awhile,
Debarred the solace of her heavenly smile,
And generously making no delay,
Prepares to guard her on her rapid way,
Without a selfish claim, or dark idea,
Across the hilly country of Judea.
They speak together of the late decree,
Which had befallen those they go to see,
Of Zachary's vision, and his voice extinct,
And all events with these two wonders linked.
But while they journey on in holy strength,
To us belongs the history more at length.

In that dread reign of Herod, Judah's king,
A certain priest, whose office was to bring,
In order due, the incense to the Lord,
And offer it according to His word,
Within the holy entered there to stay,
While all the people stood apart to pray.
His name was Zachary, of blameless life,
Who with the aged Elizabeth his wife,

Had all commandments, kept in faith, and trust,
And rightly were by all acknowledged "just."
"Abia's course" was his, while she could claim
Descent from Aron *he* of endless fame!
But full of years and childless, they had won
Regret from all that they had not a Son.
Now while his priestly functions he began,
On his right side the venerable man
Perceived with awe an angel drawing near,
Towards the altar, filling him with fear.
But said the angel, "Fear not Zachary,
Nor let thy heart and spirit troubled be,
For lo! thy prayers from God have favour won.
Elizabeth, thy wife, shall bear a son.
'John' shalt thou name him, and in hope and joy
Many shall hail the birth of this thy boy."
Before the Lord he shall be strong and great,
And from his birth, through all his manly state,
All wine and beverage strong he shall refuse:
And o'er him shall the Holy Ghost diffuse
His gifts miraculous, within the womb,
Until the habitation of the tomb.
The sons of Israel shall he convert,
Who faithfully to God shall then revert.
As erst Elias he shall prove the same,
In spirit and in power, and in fame.
A mighty prophet, who with zeal shall burn,
The father's hearts to all their children turn.

“ The feeble, he shall strengthen in their trust,
And scoffers turn to imitate the just,
To thus prepare, before the mighty Lord,
A perfect people, fitted for His Word !”
In great surprise, thus answered Zachary,
How shall I know that this can e’er be nigh ?
For I am old, in labours, toils, and fears,
And my poor wife is far advanced in years.
Then solemnly to this, the doubter’s mind,
Replied the being of angelic kind.
“ I, Gabriel am, who stand before God’s throne,
And now am sent to thee the only one,
To bring these blissful tidings, and behold !
Because thou disbelievest what I have told,
Thou shalt be dumb, until the promised hour,
When all shall be fulfilled by mighty power !”
Long time the people waited for the priest,
All wondering from the greatest to the least,
Why he remained this time absorbed in prayer ;
But when he re-appeared, his very air,
Proclaimed that secret wonders had occurred,
While silent moved his lips without a word ;
And by his signs they saw he fain would say
A vision had befallen him that day.

“ Abia’s course” of priestly functions high,
Like all of Aron’s race, in mystery
Endured a week, and therefore Zachary,

These days fulfilled, returned all silently
In pious meditation to his home ;
Consoled, 'mid present woe, with joy to come.
And soon Elizabeth in faith concealed
The certainty of what had been revealed :
And said, while thus she hid herself in prayer
Five months of hope, "Behold I will prepare,
In these my days, when I shall pleasure see,
To praise the Lord, who thus hath dealt with me."
Now ponder we between the visions given
To Mary and to Zachary from heaven,
Why *he* was punished while *her* timid heart
Was hushed in peaceful comfort, on God's part
By that same angel Gabriel ; and we find,
That want of faith arose in Zachary's mind.
While Mary's hesitation did arise,
From purity, She had been taught to prize
By God himself. She asked to be assured
That his own promises should be secured ;
And that no mortal should divide the heart
She had preserved for Him—untouched—apart.

And now had Mary, hastening reached the town,
Where Zachary had lived in good renown,
And passing to his country dwelling nigh,
Where God would His precursor sanctify,
Elizabeth saluted, who exclaimed,
Filled with the Holy Ghost and loud proclaimed,

“Blest of all women ! Thou who now hast come,
And blessed be the fruit, too, of thy womb ?
And whence is this, why should it ever be,
The mother of my Lord should come to me ?
For when the salutation of thy voice
Sounded within mine ear, *he* did rejoice.
Yes ! he, mine infant, leaping then for joy,
And blessed shalt thou be, without alloy,
Because thou has believed the promised word
That hast been spoken to thee by the Lord.”
Then Mary, usually so silent, when
Her praises might be sounded forth to men,
Who e’en from faithful Joseph had concealed
The mighty favour from on high revealed.
And even had refused, in solitude,
To be with self complacency imbued :
Recording now the wonders God had made,
And urged by holy inspiration said :

“My soul doth magnify the Lord.
And all the wonders of His word,
 In this His gracious choice.
In God my Saviour doth my heart
And spirit rise, in grateful part,
 For ever to rejoice.

Because He hath, as will be said,
The lowliness of His handmaid,

And her humility
Regarded, for behold mankind
Of every clime, and every mind,
Through generations free :

Shall call me blessed, for that He,
Who mighty is hath done to me,
Great things without alarm.
His mercy is on them who fear,
Rendering His justice not severe ;
For while His glorious arm

In majesty, hath showed might,
Scattering the proud before His sight,
In their most blind conceit :
And hath put down the mighty crowd,
With all their boastings, vain, and loud,
From off their highest seat.

The humble He hath raised, and will
The spiritually-hungered fill,
And send the rich away ;
As empty as they were before,
While He will grant a plenteous store
To Israel's future day.

Remembering mercy, while He spoke
To our forefathers, when the yoke,

Of God the Lord they bore ;
To Abraham, and to his seed,
He hath these promises decreed,
From henceforth evermore !”

Elizabeth’s maternal hour was come,
Who strengthened by the Lord brought forth her son.
Being surrounded by her neighbours kind,
And kinsfolk all, with joyful heart and mind,
Who came not only to congratulate,
But also to behold the Father’s state.
And all the wonders they had heard were given.
In token that the child was sent from heaven.
The octave day when they with prayer arose
To circumcise him and his name propose,
His mother yielded not to any one
To call him Zachary, but named him “ John.”
“ No kinsman,” urge they “ has the name of John :”
And still objecting Zachary wrote upon
His tablet there, in answer to the sign,
“ His name is John !” when, by the aid Divine,
His mouth was opened, and his tongue was free
And he began, in grateful jubilee,
To bless his God, when all his friends, that day,
Considering these things, began to say
“ What an one, think you, shall this child become ?
The right hand of the Lord is with his home.”
While all who heard of this began to fear,

Throughout the hilly country far and near.

And now inspired by the Holy Ghost,
The Father Zachary his song began.

“Blest be our God, the Lord of Israel’s host,
He who hath wrought redemption unto man !

And raiseth up to us salvation’s power,
Within the house of David’s royal line ;

As He hath promised in prophetic hour,
From earth’s beginning by His voice divine.

Deliverance from all who wish us ill,
And mercy great to all our faithful sires ;

His holy Testament remembering still,
His oath to Abraham, and our desires.

That being rescued from our enemy’s hand,
We may adore, and serve with loving praise ;

In holiness, and justice through the land,
Exempt from fear before Him, all our days.

And thou, child, shall be called, by every race,
The Prophet of the Highest, who shall go,

In spirit, and in power before His face,
His gracious coming to prepare below.

To give the knowledge to his people’s heart,
Of true salvation, which He will accord.

Remission of their sins shalt thou impart,
Through tender mercy of His gracious word.

In which the Orient from on high doth come,
Enlightening them that sit in darkest night,
Within the shadow of the dreary tomb,
Turning our feet to paths of peace and light!"

The child grew well, that highly favoured John,
And being strong in spirit, went upon
His first vocation to the desert wild,
Raised from the fears and pleasures of a child :
And there remained instructed from on high,
To live in solitude's austerity.

HYMN TO ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

I see thee on yon tow'ring height,
Take thy majestic stand ;
Thy shadow, 'gainst the western light,
Falls on the desert sand.

Mysterious being ! canst thou be
Sufficient thus alone :
In mind so lofty, heart so free,
Earth's feelings to have none ?

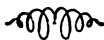
A "Voice" thou art to cry aloud
"Repent ! thy soul to save ;"
A Baptist thou to many a crowd,
By Jordan's yellow wave.

A Christian thou before thy birth,
With more than prophet's claim :
Elijah's spirit, when on earth,
Exceeded by thy fame.

"None born of woman" may compare
His quality with thine,
Saith Jesus, who bestowed this share
Of grace all but divine.

But is my admiration all
That I can render thee ?
No ! though my imitation fall
Far, far below degree :

Still let thy staunch fidelity,
Thy ever living death,
Thy truth, and thy humility
Be mine till latest breath !



CANTO VIII.

RETURN TO NAZARETH—JOSEPH'S SORROW—MARY'S SILENCE
—JOSEPH'S VISION—JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM—BIRTH OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

He who has loved, and haply not in vain,
Some creature too exalted for the strain
Of earthly passion : one who never seemed
Of ought below her Saviour to have dreamed :
And who has lived enshrined within his heart,
As favoured saint beatified, apart ;
Untouched by turbulent or jealous thought :
Which love inferior has ever brought :
While he has felt that so to love and trust,
Was like a foretaste of the risen just :
He best can tell the anguished mute controul,
And pangs afflictive of Saint Joseph's soul,
When that pure being of his sacred love,
Whom he had guarded for his Lord above,
Had seemingly, while absent from her home,
Faithless to him and to her God become !
Oh Lord ! how wonderful and dread art Thou

Toward Thy chosen ones. Ah ! tell me how
 To comprehend, and fully to record
 Such acts, in sounds harmonious to thy word.
 Those times were not as our days, when the frail
 And erring wife her conduct may bewail,
 With or without the partner of her crime,
 By evening shadows, or the morning's prime.
 Sternly the law to Israel had said,
 " Let such an one be numbered with the dead ;"
 And none might even hope to shun that fate,
 Whose husband had denounced her in his hate :
 Producing proofs beyond the earlier claim,
 Which first she might have made, to clear her fame.
 Without the city or the village home,
 With awful vengeance would the kindred come,
 And on the victim of her own disgrace,
 Despite her fair and well remembered face,
 Her pleading accents, and her fainting groans,
 Rush the relentless crushing fall of stones.

Mary well knew the fate for her in store,
 By still concealing that her God she bore,
 If Joseph should her stern accuser be,
 And the revenger of his constancy.
 Yet she was silent ! Wonderful, as true,
 The virgin's silence, in a two fold view.
 For wonderful it was, that she, so kind,
 So meek, so sympathising, should be blind

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To Joseph's anguish ! Surely this, apart
From her own danger, must have pierced her heart.
For those the sufferings of others feel,
Who least reflect on their own private weal.
Yes ! Mary suffered, but in hidden strength
Of perfect faith, she knew that God at length,
Without self-rescue from distress and blame,
Would comfort Joseph, and preserve her fame,
Leaving to Him, alone, the mode, and hour,
In which He would reveal His love and power.

Not in the annals of the world till then,
By the inspired or the stoic's pen,
Had virtue proved herself in such extreme.
Through all preceding times in high esteem
'Twas held to vindicate, in noble pride,
And conscious innocence, self-vilified.
But He who came to teach a better code,
A more sublime perfection, and the load
Of others' falsities, and ills to bear,
With unperturbed heart, and tranquil air,
He now was one with her, and did inspire
His first disciple meekly to desire,
In loving faith, whatever He should will,
The scorn of others, or their suffrage still.
And e'en her life, so precious for awhile,
Until she should behold His human smile,
And clasp within her arms, in ecstasy,

Her God and child, that wonder soon to be !
 Even her life she had resigned in hope ;
 For He Allwise and boundless in His scope,
 A man could be without her, and could save
 A guilty world, though she were in her grave.
 But God, who in his fixed eternal plan,
 Had willed to be, and not to seem a man,
 And had decreed that she, the chosen one,
 Should live to bear Him, and to call Him "Son !"
 And linked to Him by every sacred claim
 Which daughter, spouse, and mother, e'er could
 name,

He proved her vindicator, while He sent
 To virtuous Joseph, lasting, sweet content.
 Joseph, a man of firm though gentle mind,
 Of great endurance, and of patience kind ;
 In those first moments of his anguished heart,
 Had never sought to take the venger's part,
 For He was "just," and thought on Mary's youth,
 And though heart-stricken, as he was in truth,
 Would not proceed her conduct to expose,
 Nor even privately her fault disclose ;
 But guarding her from blame with heavy sigh,
 Would to seclusion send her privily.
 Ah ! ye detractors of another's fame,
 Think on Saint Joseph's silence to your shame !

HYMN ON ST. JOSEPH.

If sweet it be from tossing on the wave,
At length to enter harbour's sheltering bound,
And when from scorching mid-day's toil we crave,
On desert sands, the palm tree, and 'tis found,

So from the vexing scenes of fraud and strife,
Which daily meet our eyes on history's page,
How soothing 'tis to dwell on such a life,
Of patient constancy, from youth to age !

So slow to judge, so merciful when just,
So meek when injured on most sacred ground,
Thus worthy found to hold that place of trust
Angels might envy, did not love abound.

✠ But while he thought on these sad things with
care,
The solemn separation to prepare,
Fatigued by anxious sorrow, sleep began
Its soothing influence o'er the afflicted man.
And the Lord's angel, in a vision clear,
Said, " Joseph, son of David, do not fear
To take to thee thy wife, who doth not boast,
That now in her is of the Holy Ghost.
A son will she bring forth, of endless fame,
The Saviour of His people, and His name

Shalt thou call Jesus. Thus the prophet spake,
 And thus was it fulfilled—Judah awake !
 Behold ! with child a virgin now shall be,
 And shall bring forth a son in purity ;
 And they shall call his name Emmanuel,
 Or God with us.” The conqueror of hell !
 Then Joseph, rising from his sleep, with joy,
 To find his wife restored without alloy,
 Sought her with feelings of increased regard,
 And veneration from the angel’s word,
 Relating to her all the history
 Of her own elevation, and the tie
 Which God had formed with man, a mighty theme,
 Beyond all precedent, or fiction’s dream ;
 And drawing from her all she now might tell,
 To him, the guardian whom she loved so well.

In such discourse swift passed the sacred hours,
 Until, around their home, the leafless bowers,
 And chilly winds, beneath a darkened sky,
 Proclaimed the summer fled, and winter nigh.
 ’Twas not a time, in human reason, then
 To leave their home, and yet the sacred pen
 Records th’ enrolling, which was then unfurled
 From Cæsar, monarch of the Roman world,
 Commanding all should to those cities hie
 Belonging to their tribe and family ;
 So leaving all the comforts of their home,

Obediently, they travellers become ;
And all repining and self-pity stem,
Until they reach the royal Bethlehem.
Accommodation, all the rich obtain ;
The inns are filled by favour, or for gain,
While they rejected are from door to door ;
For room is wanting for the humble poor.
They make their lodging in a humble shed,
Two beasts their company, and straw their bed,
And there remained, to ponder on the ways
Inscrutable of God, in awe and praise !
For thus, without proclaiming to the earth
The time and place of His stupendous birth,
He had, by combination of events
Or second causes, brought, to all intents
Of prophecy, Himself concealed,
To this the very place by seers revealed,
Who thus had long declared, "Thou Bethlehem,
Art not the least amongst the towns of men.
For out of thee, thou city shall appear ;
'A captain,' who the willing hearts shall cheer
Of all my people, even Israel." Of this they spake
On that December night, in hope awake.
Mary and Joseph were convinced, that here,
And at this very time Christ would appear ;
And Joseph, as a skilful artisan,
Endeavoured in his piety, some plan
To render less exposed to wind, and cold,

The Bethlehem stable, where she would infold
 Within her arms, perhaps that very hour,
 The Lord of Glory and Almighty power !
 While she, with tender awe, the ready bands
 For infant's swathing, held within her hands ;
 And kneeling by the ox's manger, where
 The ass stood also, soon in highest prayer
 Of union was absorbed, while he withdrew
 A little way aside, yet still in view,
 His task he finished, then in silent awe,
 Remained apart in prayer, until he saw,
 A sudden light by Mary, and he found
 That beaming light before her on the ground ;
 And watching viewed her adorations given,
 With love maternal, to the Babe of Heaven !
 Then prostrate fell the holy man, before
 The Deity, to marvel, and adore :
 While angels gathered round to view that sight
 Within a stable—on a winter's night !

No pain had Mary suffered in the birth,
 Which gave a Saviour to the guilty earth.
 No sensual pleasure in her nuptials known,
 Which Eva's sin has caused to every one,
 She also was exempt, and never knew
 The penalty which to that curse is due ;
 And felt no need, in her extatic trance,
 That to her aid, a mortal should advance.

He, who the solid door, when strictly close,
Permitted not His body to oppose.
Yet left it all unaltered as He passed,
Except in sanctity while time shall last.
So left His Mother, purest virgin still.
This is of faith, the essence of His will.
Oh ! who that e'er such ties may think to prove,
Can sound the depths of that young Mother's love ?
Who can imagine all that passed between
Her heart and His, in colloquy unseen ?
Endemnifying her, by grace infused,
For those sweet accents, which His state refused.
While she, in wonder at His silence still,
And that controul, which His Almighty Will
Placed on His perfect faculties as man,
Would fear to disarrange His sacred plan.
And often would in doubt and awe, abstain
From serving Him—yet all these fears were vain.
Fresh inspiration moved her tender heart
To perfectly fulfil a Mother's part.
And reassured that sinless creature strove
To prove to her Creator all her love ;
Which nothing could exceed, or e'en compare.
But the immensity of His for her.
As infinite as His Perfection, and
The boundless scope of His supreme command.
And this she knew ! Ah ! blest and holy joy !
Can theme more bright the favoured pen employ ?

CANTO IX.

VISION OF THE SHEPHERDS—ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS—CIRCUMCISION AND NAME OF JESUS—ADORATION OF THE KINGS—PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN—PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD—SIMEON'S PROPHECY—FLIGHT INTO EGYPT—THE REPOSE IN EGYPT.

“GLORY to God in highest, and on earth
To all men peace, who hail the wond'rous birth !”
Thus sang the heavenly armies, circling round
The simple shepherds, on their pasture ground,
Nigh Bethlehem arose that midnight scene,
On sloping sheep-lands rich in pasture green,
Where herdsmen kept their faithful watch by night
Beside their flocks : and when, to cheer the sight
Of Mary and of Joseph, midnight hour
Brought forth the child of glory and of power,
To greet the watchful shepherds there appeared
A dazzling brightness round them which they feared.
But near them stood an angel of the Lord,
Who said, “Fear not, behold ! I bring you gracious
word.

Of tidings good and great in sacred joy,
Which every heart exulting shall employ.
For unto you this day is born and given
A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord from heaven !
In David's city is the Babe Divine,
And this to you shall be the certain sign—
Where in a manger shall an Infant be,
Wrapped in his swathing bandage that is He !”
And then departed from them all the train
Of angel company to heaven again.
Then spake the shepherds, saying, “ Let us go
Within the royal city here below ;
And let us see fulfilled the angel's word,
Which graciously he showed us from the Lord.”
With one accord they entered Bethlehem
In haste, and searching to the stable came,
Where blessed Mary and her spouse they found,
Then humbly prostrated upon the ground ;
For they perceived that, as the angel said,
Within a manger was an Infant laid.
And seeing Him, they fully understood
The all, which had been promised them of good.
Then spread they all around the joyful tale,
Which they who heard the shepherds, did not fail
To carry further, while these faithful men
Returned, with joyful hearts, their sheep to pen,
Giving to God all glory, love, and praise,
For this benignant gladdening of their days,

But Mary published nothing, and apart
Kept these memorials treasured in her heart.

And now commenced the first maternal woe,
Which she was doomed so heavily to know,
In number and increased affliction given.....
“A man of sorrows,” was the child from heaven !
And she in every act was taught anew,
That in His birth He had His death in view :
While most submissively she understood
The precious offering of his Infant blood.
Not in atonement for Himself, as man,
Who knew no sin, but perfecting the plan
Ordained, that on His guiltless form the law
Should be fulfilled ; and when this day she saw,
On the octave of His birth, the legal knife,
In earnest of the sufferings of His life,
The first keen thrust of grief was given her heart,
Which, as a mother’s, bled its early part.
The sacred name of “Jesus” then was given,
To which all knees shall ever bow in heaven,
Above all other names on high to soar,
While hell shall tremble, and the earth adore.
By God commanded, name for ever dear
Of “Saviour”—love which casteth out all fear,
Fittingly received by Him, in this same hour,
When though supreme in majesty, and power,
He suffered for us, in His human state,

That we His merits might participate
From tenderest infancy. Ah ! grant we bring
Pure hearts, respondent to his suffering !

And now behold, in sovereign command,
Three princes, guided from a distant land,
By inspiration, following a star,
Which they had seen and recognised afar,
As shining o'er the dwelling of the king,
To whom the richest offerings they bring.
In sign of fealty each a gift awards,
Owning Him King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
Undaunted by the poverty they see,
A lowly infant on His mother's knee,
They offer myrrh, frankincense, purest gold ;
Prophetic emblems all, long time foretold—
The gold proclaims His royal lineage fair,
Frankincense, too, the offering of prayer :
And bitterness of myrrh, the penalty
Which sin involves to suffer and to die !
These kings were sages—Magi—not the least
In all the mystic learning of the East.
And God, who had beheld their “good-will,” sent
A sign adapted to the usual bent
Of their high studies, showing them, by means
Attractive to them, 'mid the starry scenes,
On which they speculated long in vain,
The one bright Truth, just risen on Judah's plain.

HYMN ON THE PURIFICATION.

Away with thoughts of vindication,
Thoughts of self-esteem and pride,
Claiming what is due, when station
Is to innocence allied :

For we see this holy virgin,
Mother blest in purity,
As from clearest fount emerging,
At each fresh mysterious tie ;

Yet submitting, like another,
To the legal penalty,
As an ordinary mother,
'Neath the cleansing law to lie.

Thus so silent and so lowly,
She is worthy found to hear
Simeon's revelations holy,
Of the sufferings she must bear.

Like a sevenfold sword of anguish,
Piercing her maternal heart,
Sympathising must she languish,
Till with life her grief depart.

Thus her flame—no empty vapour—
Calmly sheds its light around.
Oh! may thus *our* mystic taper
Humbly pure like hers be found!

Past forty days according to the law,
Our Lady viewed Jerusalem once more.
Her Infant in her arms, she entered where
Her peaceful girlhood had been spent in prayer.
As He had first submitted to the rite
Of circumcision, so, in Israel's sight,
Was she inspired to be now purified,
Like other women commonly allied :
Not ignorant that when his birth took place
He added to her sanctity and grace,
But silently content in all to be
Concealed from man's applause, in secrecy.
The aged Simeon, not high priest this year,
But ever full of mental visions clear,
Awaiting Israel's consolation, most
Just and devout, filled with the Holy Ghost,
Who promised him, what he had long implored,
He should not die until he saw the Lord,
Within the Temple, by the Spirit, now
Beheld St. Mary and recalled her vow.
A vow beyond his former blind controul,
Inspired by God's election of her soul.
Then Mary offered up her first-born male,

Then ransomed her beloved by holy sale ;
And meekly then fulfilled the ancient law
For childbirth. Now when Simeon saw
That these her pious offerings had sped,
And turtle doves and pigeons too had bled,
He took the Infant, Jesus, in his arms,
Exulting thus to witness all his charms.
“ Thy servant’s life dismissed by thee shall cease,
According to thy word, O Lord, in peace,
For thy salvation do mine eyes behold,
Which to all people’s knowledge shall be told ;
To Gentile’s revelation, greater light,
To thine own Israel a glorious sight !”
Then wondered they to hear him prophecy
The things which they had known, too, from on
high,
And blessing them to Mary, thus he spake :—
“ Behold this child the fall of some will make,
And others’ resurrection, and a sign
Which shall be contradicted, though Divine.
And thine own soul shall feel the piercing sword,
That, out of many hearts, the plaintive word
Of supplication be revealed to thee,
And e’en their thoughts may meet with sympathy.”
And aged Anna, spoken of before,
Who came within the Temple to adore,
Beheld the Child, and, by the Spirit’s aid,
Confessed the Lord and many wonders said

To all who deemed that now approached the hour
Of Israel's redemption, through his power.

Mary and Joseph now departed hence,
But not to Bethlehem, for, in suspense,
Joseph received, within his sleep, command
To take the child and mother from the land.
For danger lurked through Herod's jealousy ;
To Egypt's distant clime they were to flee.
This time 'twas Joseph only heard the voice,
And Mary was required to have no choice,
But yielding to the delegated power,
Joseph to trust and follow in that hour.
Yes ! though her tender heart was pierced by woe,
The " sword " of grief its second thrust to know,
Mary begins her exile to a land
Of foreign language, over desert sand,
In faith that God, who gave this prompt command,
Would guard the child by His Almighty Hand.
If exiles they could be, where'er they roam,
Who take with them their Treasure and their
Home.
The hearts of many softened as they came,
And lodging gave, and food, nor could they blame,
Or ought suspect of harm, the holy three,
Who oft repaid their hospitality :
Curing their sick by little fragments torn
From off the swathing bands the child had worn.

Thus passed they on to Heliopolis,
Now Mataryeh, where, not far from this
Grand Cairo lies, and there beneath a tree,
Which still with veneration pilgrims see,
Secure from danger, Mary took her rest
In sweet repose, her God upon her breast ;
While Joseph, faithful guardian, rested nigh :
They being sheltered from the burning sky
By this extraordinary sycamore,
Which then its branches in perfection bore,
Casting a shade proportioned, in extent,
To its circumference, which, firm, unrent,
Presents six fathoms round its trunk this day,
Where faithful travellers admire and pray.
Some paces off "The Virgin's Fountain" springs,
Which cool refreshment to the weary brings ;
This fountain gushed miraculously where
The Virgin Mother craved this boon in prayer.

Here "The Repose in Egypt" first began,
Theme inexhaustible for finite man.
The life of contemplation, drawn apart
From all the wants exterior to the heart,
With God alone his study and delight,
The object of his hearing and his sight,
Of every sense the centre and the aim,
His sole ambition and his only fame ;
All this the saints have known by special grace,

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Yet far inferior, in strength and space,
To that blest union and that heavenly tie
Which God was pleased with Mary to ally.
Not chiefly by the joy, which then she knew,
That from her breasts His nourishment He drew :
Nor yet that He had rested silent—dark—
Within His sanctified, and chosen Ark.
This contract to the Deity, 'tis true,
Had hallowed her for ever, yet she knew
The union of her soul was paramount,
Which drank, for ever, at the Living Fount.
Her contemplation was of that rare kind,
Which in the annals of the Church, we find
Bestowed on none in such supreme degree :
Mortal, yet drawn within the Trinity !

Beneath this venerable sycamore,
The holy family their strength restore,
And then, for more seclusion, onward go
Along the course of Nile's majestic flow,
Near Memphis, to a solitary grot,
Long time disused and by the world forgot,
Where sheltering rock and foilage thick abound,
By Cairo's ruins now encircled round.
While on it stands the monastery where
The brethren of St. Sergius still repair :
And where they have preserved, in due respect,
The grotto from oblivion and neglect.

And Joseph here pursued his humble trade,
And Mary's tender skill their garments made.
While Jesus deigned each year to manifest
Increase of wisdom, as of beauty blest.
A beauty He had willed, in freest choice,
From her whom he resembled too in voice,
In these young days while yet His accents fell,
Soft and harmonious as a silver bell.
And here the "seamless garment" Mary wove :
Increasing with His growth, to pay her love.



CANTO X.

RETURN FROM EGYPT—ABODE AT NAZARETH—YEARLY
JOURNEY AND FEAST OF THE PASSOVER AT JERUSALEM—
JESUS IS LOST—IS FOUND IN THE TEMPLE—THE HIDDEN
LIFE AT NAZARETH—DEATH OF SAINT JOSEPH.

IN foulest agonies and dread remorse
The impious Herod dies. And while his corse
To gorgeous tomb, 'mid hired grief descends,
His chosen Archelaus the throne ascends.
Now Heaven commands the exile, "Take the Child,
And with His mother, leave this country wild;
And hasten home without a dread of strife,
For they are dead who erst have sought His life."
Obediently they journey to Judea,
Though not to Salem—trembling in idea.
But after much considering where to be,
Returned to Nazareth of Galilee.
'Twas thus fulfilled the prophet's mental light,
That Jesus should be called "A Nazarite."
And they removed not, save that every year,
Obedient to the law, they must appear
Within the city of Jerusalem.

And Jesus, as 'tis written, went with them.
Then were the days of the unleavened bread,
Commanded by the Lord, and kept with dread,—
To disobey were death ; and from these days
Began at night the awful Feast of Praise.
The victim of the passage of the Lord,
The Paschal Lamb consumed on every board.
Lo ! on the posts, and transom of the door,
Its blood the hyssop branch had marked before
In haste they ate, according to command,
Their garments girded and with staff in hand.
A record only was this feast to some,
Of Israel's first born, saved in early bloom ;
While others faintly traced the twofold scheme,
And dimly saw the Christ who would redeem :
While He the antitype, so soon to die,
The only Lamb whose blood can satisfy.
And Israel truly saved assisted there,
Unknown to all, a thoughtful child of prayer.

Not yet had He displayed to human sight
His stores divine of wisdom and of light.
When lo ! past twelve years old, at this last feast,
His mother lost Him, when suspecting least,
On her return, 'mid kinsfolk and her friends :
Till having sought Him, grief with terror blends,
And after two days' journey thence, she came
Back to Jerusalem—all language tame

And feeble is to image but a part
Of such distress as wrung that mother's heart !
And fitly doth the Church commemorate
In sympathy the mystery of her state.
'Twas not her fault, and yet her griefs begin
To tax her with some slight or unknown sin,
Which has repulsed Him from her watchful eye :
The " sword " now pierces her with agony !
For this bereavement is not like the one
She was inspired to bear, when from her Son
She parted, at the customary year
Of weaning, for she then had not a fear.
Although afflicted, yet she thought no ill,
'Twas His own doing, and she saw him still.
And He assisted her who still was nigh,
With strength infused, and scarcely did she sigh.
But now in mystery denied such aid,
Mary is doubly left. Thus Simeon said,
That in our desolations we may cry
To her who once has felt our misery,
When left by Jesus in our hour of prayer.
Or in the labour He was wont to share :
Her firm example, that it may be ours
In seeking him through long and painful hours,
In self-examination, and in fears,
In humble love, and soft intreating tears ;
Leaving the road of kindred and of friends,
If there no more his presence Jesus lends.

Our Lady now, on her most sad return,
With Joseph sharing in her deep concern,
Enters the city of Jerusalem,
So lately trod, when Jesus was with them,
In admiration at its structures rare,
Its royal avenues beyond compare,
Its many gates, which all some history tell,
And which the crowds of foreign barbers swell,
Its sparkling fountains and its hanging groves,
Its cool retreats, where plaintive coo the doves ;
All now seems empty bustle, noise, and show,
For *He* is gone, who calms all things below.
But after three days' search, in faithful prayer,
At length they are inspired to enter where
They have been wont, at other times, to bring
Their joys or sorrows to the Eternal King,
And on the Temple's consecrated floor
They prostrate, to beseech Him and adore.
Then rising, they behold, with dazzled eyes,
The Author, and the Object of their sighs.
Not, as before, the silent hidden child,
Yielding to others in submission mild.
But deigning, 'mid these sacred doctors more
Diffusion of his superhuman store.
Midst the assembly of these hoary men,
Are some who trace, from heaven inspired pen,
Such clear announcement of the present truth,
In this mysterious and awful youth,

Who stands majestic there with searching eye,
With question keen and solemn deep reply,
That, struck with awe, at length they silent gaze
In fear, and admiration, and amaze.
Like circled ruin, thus the Church of old,
Groups round the living Temple long foretold.

And happy Mary also gazed upon
The wond'rous offspring she had lost and won :
And yet with dread her bosom fluttered still,
Lest ignorantly guilty of some ill,
She had been punished ; and approaching near,
She softly murmured, in her hope and fear,
“ Why hast Thou done this to us both, my Son,
Behold ! in sorrow have we sought Thee long,”
Then answered He : “ How is it ye have said
That ye have sought me. It was meet I sped
My Father's business ! ” Then her heart o'erflowed,
And instant consolation was bestowed.
She had not alienated him, e'en though
She still might lose his presence here below.
And in aridity, without remorse,
The heart can wait until, in timely course,
The gracious Giver of all happiness
Remove the desolation and distress.
But Mary's past bereavement and her tears
Were superseded by those eighteen years
Of Jesus' hidden life, the dearest theme

For true contemplatives ! for 'tis no dream
That He, the Saint of Saints, who came to be
The model for all zeal and sanctity,
Whose miracles and constant preaching fill
The inspired pages of the gospel still,
Gave three years only of these public deeds,
While, hidden from the world, His life exceeds
That time in sixfold measure. Wonderful !
To all the preachers of our modern school,
These lengthened years of preparation due.
Let them perceive how wise it is and true
That master minds, who give example, need
Doubly to learn, that they may fitly lead,
Leaving their solitude of prayer and thought
Only when holy stores are duly fraught.
But if His solitude our praise excites,
What admirable course of varied lights
His wonderful obedience casts around
On filial homes ! where haply there be found
Too many restless hearts. Ah ! let these see
A God obey His creatures, and, though free,
Remain in all things subject ! Then let pride
And boundless liberty their daring hide
In that dark shade where rebel angels fell,
Who scorned the filial yoke, and gained a hell !
And let each lowly, faithful, loving heart
Follow, in hope, the Saviour's humble part.

Thus Mary, while commanded to command,
Humbled herself in spirit 'neath His hand,
Pondering on all His conduct, and His speech
Within the Temple, nor did she beseech
To have the explanation and the certain clue,
But treasured in her heart the words she knew.
In wisdom and in age, before the view
Of God the Father, and before the few
Of mankind privileged to have the sight
Of Jesus, humble Artisan and Nazarite,
In labour and in prayer the Youth Divine
Consented gradually to brighter shine.
Thus passed these eighteen years, until the voice
Of His Pre-sanctified and early choice,
Inspired to preach and prophecy, proclaims
The advent of the Lord in lofty strains.
And these long meditative years are o'er
Of Mary's happiness, unknown before
Or since by any saint, however blessed,
To have the presence visible possessed,
Though veiled in perfect manhood, of her God
Through thirty years, save when alone he trod
His youthful mission ; years of light and peace,
Though shadowed by the time when they must
cease.

During the peaceful tenor of these years
Jesus had cheered the hopes and soothed the fears

Of Joseph's deathbed, while the virgin wife
Thanked him for all the succours of her life,
Through many years from her first bridal bloom,
And softened the dread exit to the tomb
By grateful cares, and tones, and smiles of peace,
Assuring him *his* joys would never cease
Who had protected her ; and Jesus gave
His sanction to her words, and o'er the grave
And death proclaimed Himself victorious,
Freeing His captive saints in number glorious.
But few short years had Joseph then to wait,
In hope within the ⁱntermediate state,
With all the faithful saved, when he would rise,
Amidst the crowds triumphant, to the skies.
And now to Jesus giving his last sighs,
With faithful Mary by to close his eyes.
The happy Joseph yielded up his breath.—
Ah ! truly may we claim his aid in death,
If we dare also claim to have a share
In our Redeemer's love, and Mary's care.
Thrice happy death-bed then ! Grant Lord that
we
May thus depart, who trace this history !



MEDITATION ON MARY'S HIDDEN LIFE WITH JESUS
AT NAZARETH.

With Him whom thou didst lose and find,
With Him who is thine All, thy mind
And heart are now at peace ;
Oh ! blessed life ! with Him to be
In sweet commune and harmony,
All doubts and fears must cease.

The thought alone now dwelt upon,
My inmost soul has filled and won
To rare tranquillity ;
My home, until my latest breath,
Shall be the house at Nazareth ;
I'll live with Him and thee.

On every simple duty here
His love now shines so bright and clear
They have become sublime ;
Engaged with them I feel Him near
Whether in active work or prayer,
Through hours of golden time.

If He be absent then I ask
Have I displeased thee in my task ?
Was it not done for thee ?
Ah ! leave me not ; or if thou dost,
Grant me some pledge to hope and trust
Thou wilt return to me !

CANTO XI.

PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST—HIS FAVOURS TO
HIS BLESSED MOTHER—HER FIRST PUBLIC INTERCES-
SION—SHE IS INSPIRED TO DRAW FROM OUR LORD HIS
INSTRUCTION ON THE DUTY OF A PUBLIC TEACHER—SHE
IS A MOTHER TO THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE public life of Jesus has begun,
And Mary bids a farewell to her Son ;
But He remembers her, and in her home,
Widowed and doubly desolate become,
Mary, in mental visions, is removed
To share the changes of her best beloved.
By Jordan's hallowed wave, and in the wild
Where he was tempted, she beheld her child.
Entranced to all immediately around,
Her spirit followed to the farthest ground
Made holy by His presence, and she knew
The words He spake, and sweetest comfort drew.
And sometimes from a chosen height she viewed
His crowd of followers, and then pursued
With piercing gaze, until His stature tall
And tread majestic showed Him midst them all.

This might suffice, yet if there should appear
Some pious friends with whom to venture near,
Mary, in veil of white and mantle blue,
As long tradition gives, in witness true,
Followed the multitude, to hear and see
The daily wonders of his ministry ;
Thoughtfully watching, to its full extent,
The course divine of each foretold event.
Thus satisfied in privacy to keep,
His humble follower, disciple meek,
Twice only, as we find by sacred pen,
She publicly besought His grace to men.
'Twas in the early days of his career,
She found with joy that Jesus would appear
With His disciples at a festival.
She too consented to the bridal call,
And at the hospitable festive board
Once more was seated by her dearest Lord,
Who fixed that friendly meeting and that hour
To prove what, through his favour, was her power.
Though pure in nature, by His grace ordained,
A gift n'er lessened, forfeited, or stained,
Throughout the holy tenor of her life,
And therefore blameless passed this world of strife.
Yet this continued grace received still more
Direct and vivid from the sacred store
When God so willed that, aiding purpose high,
She should appear and act more publicly.

What *then* she ever did, or said, or thought,
Was solely by His inspiration wrought,
And hence the courage which that creature mild
Evinced when acting with her God and Child.
The concourse at the marriage feast was great,
And still, beyond the guests, there entered late
Many attracted by the news that He,
Become renowned throughout all Galilee,
Was then at Cana, on that bridal day,
And hospitably they were bid to stay ;
When great the sorrow of their generous host,
The wine now failed, when it was wanted most !
Chill fell the news upon the bridegroom's heart,
In which all sympathised by looks apart.
'Twas then within our Lady's kindly breast
Arose the inspiration and request,
"They have no wine !" with calm, though tender
air.

And Jesus then, to show the strength of prayer,
When fervent and redoubled, answered brief
And coldly, almost to deny relief :
"Woman ! to me and thee what signify
These things of time ? Mine hour is not yet nigh."
But Mary fearlessly, who knew his mind,
Said to the waiters, "Whatso'er ye find
That He shall say unto you, *that* do ye."
Nor trusted she in vain, for instantly,
To mark His yielding to her influence,

The time of miracles He did advance,
And at her wish, before the appointed hour,
By His innate and all-sufficient power,
Changed the pure element of water there
To truest wine, and rich beyond compare !
If thus to Mary's pity for their grief
He publicly was pleased to give relief,
Although 'twas not for sin bewailed, or woe
Of deepest kind, much more doth He bestow,
And much more earnestly doth she too plead
For those who trust to her in prayer and deed,
And turn to her with all the fearless love
A Mother should inspire them from above !

Again did Mary shrink from public view,
And live in privacy amidst the few.
But once we find she 'companied the sons
Of her first cousin, those who are the ones
By Jewish term, the "Brethren of the Lord,"
Amongst the multitude to hear His word.
And when her kinsmen beg to see him near,
To ask this is inspired without a fear,
The instrument of Christ to draw the fine
And deep instruction from His Lips Divine.
On hearing her request, the standers by
With zeal convey the message instantly.
"Oh Lord ! Thy Mother and Thy brethren see
Who stand without and seek to speak to Thee."

Then Jesus, as the Missionary Priest,
To whom the fleshly tie should be the least,
Gave this instruction, in His mode sublime,
To be remembered ever throughout time.
“ Who is my mother, who my brethren ! ”
And further as records the sacred pen,
His hand stretched over his disciple’s head,
Behold my mother and my brethren, said,
“ For whoso shall perform my Father’s will,
He is my brother, sister, mother still ! ”
Then she, His true and first disciple there,
“ Doing his Father’s will,” in constant prayer,
Doubly His mother was ; and this she knew
By His assurance—then in peace withdrew ;
Except when she gave welcome and her aid
To all the converts by His preaching made :
Commencing then the sweet maternal bond
To the young Christian Church, alliance fond
And sacred, giving promise here of peace,
Which through eternity shall never cease ;
And winning Christian matrons so to prove
A shelter to the younger, full of love.
Not hurrying the course of those young hearts,
From which all creature love with pain departs,
But gently teaching, by example most,
How far transcending all this earth can boast,
To fill their ardent wish for happiness,
Increase each hope, diminish each distress :

H

Is that pure joy—that all engrossing love
Of Him, who sweetly draws them from above?

RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

Ah ! may we venture on this theme,
May we depict what never dream,
Or fabled song may tell :
Of union and of confidence,
Of calm reposing innocence,
Deeper than storied well?

The half-formed thought, the unuttered sigh,
All known, and meeting sympathy
From a pure endless heart :
That never doubts, that never ties,
That gives e'en more than it inspires,
This is the “better part !”



CANTO XII.

SATAN MACHINATIONS—ST. MARY PARTICIPATES IN THE
MENTAL ANGUISH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST—HER
KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CORPORAL SUFFERINGS—HER
SORROW IS WITHOUT REMORSE—THE VIRGIN MOTHER
AT THE CROSS—PASSION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST—HIS SACRED HEART.

A MIGHTY shadow falls across the earth,
And awful deeds are struggling to the birth.
Satan suspect that something goes not well
For him, and all his myriads in hell :
And though the human nuptials of the maid
Had kept the secret, ne'er to him betrayed,
Of Jesu's wondrous Birth ; yet Satan's light,
Tarnished and dimmed in the angelic fight,
But not extinguished, glares athwart the gloom,
To view what Mary's Offspring will become.
And thus his rage to foil the Almighty plan,
His ruin brings, and helps to rescue man.
With all the quick perception of her love,
Mary detects, mid all who seem to move,

Like planets true, around their glorious Sun,
Receiving light and heat, a single one
Is false ; and though his guilt is yet afar,
She marks the quivering of that falling star,
And in that fall distinguishes the train
Of harrowing events that yet remain
In further distance. Yet—must it be so ?
Must Judas be the one to cause this woe ?
Cannot some stranger or some enemy
Deliver up the Lamb that soon must die ?
Her Son must die to blot out sin and tears :
She *this* has known through three and thirty years.
Has known and has accepted, in her zeal
For God's pure glory, and His childrens' weal.
The mother chosen of the human race,
She longs their guilt and suffering to efface,
And in sublime tranquillity awaits
The rolling thunder-storm in all its states.
He wills His precious sufferings and death,
And Jesu's will is Mary's life and breath.
Still may she mourn, while instruments abound,
That Judas, once a friend, must give the wound !
For this e'en Jesus felt, and every woe
Her mournful privilege it was to know :
By mental vision and by inward voice,
United thus to Him by His free choice,
Till the last drop of Blood Divine was spilt ;
For *she* had never added to the guilt

Which weighed His Spirit to the lowest pass
 Of dereliction. Ah ! only she alas !
 Could bear such knowledge, for in all its course
 She, ever sinless, never knew remorse.
 And here the difference tradition paints
 Between her woe and that of favoured saints :
 Who privileged in visions dread and clear,
 To know what sin is, and the ransom dear,
 Which for their guilty souls the Saviour paid,
 Have shrunk amazed in anguish,—then have prayed
 That, mortal they, the vision might depart,
 Ere grief, remorse, and pity, burst their heart !

The feelings those of Magdalen, that type
 Of all true penitents, whose soul was ripe
 For knowledge thus of her accepted state,
 At mighty cost ! Whose trembling heart dilate
 With Love Divine, through every awful scene,
 Accused herself His Murderer to have been !
 Nor dwell we on the picture of her woe,
 In abstract sentiment, for this we know—
 That not alone the sin of ages past,
 From death of Abel, to the Cross at last,
 But equally the future sin to be,
 Produced the Saviour's Garden Agony !
 And there were *we* with all our sins of thought,
 Of word, of action, of omission fraught,
 His Spirit weighing down, in that dark hour,

Of God's withdrawal, and of Satan's power ;
Till the humanity no more withstood,
But gushed forth in the sacred Sweat of Blood !

The holy women ever hovering nigh,
Although forbidden by the soldiery
Their master to approach, together kept,
Around His mother, and in silence wept :
Waiting the coming of the faithful few,
Who stole at times, to tell them all they knew ;
But oft when nothing could they hear or know,
Mary had fainted from excess of woe :
And they perceived, by every look and word,
In spirit she was following her Lord.
Had seen the fatal kiss by Judas given,
Till Jesus to the City Gaol was driven !
Thus spent the Thursday night. On Friday morn
He passed along the road of pain and scorn ;
Bearing His Cross, with thorn-crown bleeding head,
His body rent by flagellations made :
Disciples fled, in terror, and in shame,
Having denied Him, through the fear of blame :
By mental anguish visited and tried,
His strength and beauty gone—she scarce descried
Her Son, yet inspiration urged her through the crowd
Of blind blasphemers, uttering curses loud,
And foremost in the ranks obtains a place,
To see Him near, and give a last embrace.

And now the sword its fourth keen thrust has given
 To Mary's heart by love maternal riven ;
 And had not Faith and Hope and Love Divine
 Supported her, she must upon that shrine
 Of unrequited, as unequalled love,
 Have rendered up her soul.—But now they move,
 With fresh rapidity, and brutal force
 The Saviour's failing steps, and now they cross
 The brook foretold in prophecy.—But here
 Let each to whom his suffering Lord is dear,
 Pause, and accept his own afflictions given,
 By Him who mourned on earth and reigns in
 heaven.

HYMN ON THE CARRIAGE OF THE CROSS.

Thou who didst sink beneath the rood,
 Mid blasphemy and jeer,
 When Cedron laved Thy precious blood,
 And not a friend was near.

Oh ! by that thrice repeated fall,
 Beneath Thy heavy load,
 As if to prove that we may call
 For aid on our sad road.

Behold me now, and let my heart
 Its " Station " take with Thee,
 And generously bear a part
 In this great mystery,

That when again I look around,
On hopes and trust betrayed,
I then be lifted from the ground,
By superhuman aid.

Our delicacy cannot bear the pain
Of such details, as swell this mournful strain.
The sight, the sound, of Jesus suffering ;
And we would fain believe that he did bring
His Deity to raise Him o'er the woe,
His pure Humanity was then to know :
But 'tis of faith that He withheld the power,
Which oft He granted in the martyr's hour,
To mitigate, and even change their pangs
To high extatic trance.—For *Him* the fangs
Of Death were sharpened, and without relief.
And is it then for us, with mention brief,
To turn our spirit from the mournful scene,
And soon forget that such distress had been !
Ah! such was not the bent of Mary's heart.
In every tragic step she bore a part.
Saw from His bleeding form the "garment" torn,
He had by miracle from Childhood worn :
Heard the relentless strokes on each dread nail,
Transfixing to the Cross His members pale :
The brutal clamour—the exulting cry,
When raised the Cross on fatal Calvary ;
And, piercing through the rabble, firmly stood,

To Jesus faithful, by His holy rood !
Ah ! not on Thabor's Mount had Mary been
Associated to that glorious scene,
When Jesus shed His glory all around,
And prostrate fell the apostles to the ground.
She His beloved, and nearest to His heart,
For whom He would reserve the better part,
Was thus to stand, with agonising breath,
The witness of His bitter cross, and death !
Ye desolated souls, take comfort then,
When glory is denied in sight of men :
And think not from beneath the Cross to move,
'Twas here *she* clung—'twas here she found her
Love !

Enduring that keen thrust—the fifth in time,
Of those which gave the mystic points sublime
Of Mary's dolours—Mother of all saints !
This constancy our hand unworthy paints
With awe, and veneration ! and our eye
Now rests, with pleased, though mournful sympathy,
On Mary Magdalen, and then upon
Mary of Cleophas, and the favoured John.
He there alone, the type of all mankind,
The filial tie with Mary there to bind.
Woe to the daring hand and heart of pride,
That would annul what Jesus has allied !
“ Woman behold thy Son ! ” the Saviour said,
Commending thus to her, the chosen maid,

St. John our representative, and then
Addressing him, the most beloved of men,
"Behold thy Mother!" These words are among
The "Seven Sentences" the Church has sung,
In awful memory of the Saviour's death,
Hallowed memorials of His latest breath!
Containing each a deep and mystic sense,
Besides the meaning which it first presents,
And both fulfilled—for all the days to come,
The loved Disciple, took her to his home.

'Tis over now, that three hours' agony!—
The Saviour has with loud and thrilling cry,
His spirit severed from His murdered corse.
And struck with sudden dread, and e'en remorse,
The trembling multitude of Deicides,
Wander in darkness which creation hides.
The earthquake, and the rising of the dead,
But more the memory of all He said,
His miracles and virtues pierce their hearts,
They smite their breasts—each one by one departs,
Then back return, some truly penitent,
Whom grace has touched. And when the time
was spent
Of this great darkness, one amidst the throng,
Active and curious, yet not wholly wrong,
A soldier, who in infancy was cured
By Jesus, when His exile He endured,

Now moved to know if he indeed were dead,
Urged on his horse, and to the Saviour sped.
An instrument, unconscious on his part,
To open to the world that Sacred Heart :
Whence flowed, from out the wound, the living
Flood
Of expiatory Water, and of Blood !
Which wrought its primal miracle we find,
On him, Longinus, previously near blind.

HYMN TO THE SACRED HEART.

Who may dare to trace the measure
Of that boundless, mystic Heart :
Who may calculate a treasure
Angels only know in part !

Heart of Jesus ! what a theme
Awfully to sing or say !
Truth more fair than any dream,
Far beyond all fiction's lay.

Sacred Heart ! by that deep wound,
Thou didst welcome on the Cross,
Let me enter, having found
Thou art gain for every loss.

Loving and beloved for ever,
Where's the Cross and where's the rod !
Ye who would from anguish sever,
Enter now the Heart of God !



CANTO XIII.

THE SOUL OF JESUS CHRIST ARISES IN THE ABODE OF
SEPARATE SPIRITS—THE STAIN OF ORIGINAL SIN IS
EFFACED FROM EACH SOUL—THE DESPAIR OF THE
DEVILS, AND OF THE LOST SOULS—TRIUMPH OF THE
ANGELS—TAKING DOWN FROM THE CROSS—ENTOMBMENT—
RESURRECTION—ASCENSION—THE HOLY GHOST DESCENDS
ON MARY AND THE APOSTLES.

SOME years o'er Limbo's twilight when the track
Of Mary's Star, which in some Cantos back
We sang, remained,—the bright and glorious Sun
Of Jesu's soul His rapid course had run,
When He descended into Mary's Womb,
Leaving a light, for hope in joy to come.
And now what bursts of grateful welcome rise,
To Him victorious, who gains the prize
Of countless souls, which soon by him made free,
Will follow Him in train of Jubilee !
Yet forty days alone—and now, meanwhile
They have their Heaven in His present smile :
And joy to find in purity they shine,
In blest effulgence of His rays divine.
If greater joy could two, above the rest,

Feel to be purified—the most opprest,
 And most desirous, through long ages past,
 To welcome their Redeemer here at last,
 Our primal parents they, who now renew
 The joy of Paradise, when first they drew
 Their breath in happy innocence ; and more
 Of joy is added to their former store.
 And faithful Abraham, and David, too,
 In joy extatic their descendant view ;
 With Joachim and Anna : while the man
 Who humbly had obeyed his Saviour's plan,
 St. Joseph met his Lord in favour high,
 To be exalted greatly in the sky.

But while all Limbo triumphs now they hear
 The howlings of the Demons, full of fear,
 With greater rage and disappointed pride,
 To lose the prize on which they all relied.
 But mostly he, Arch-rebel Lucifer,
 Lost in despair, can neither will nor stir ;
 And now, in all revengeful malice, they
 Turn to the souls whom they have made their prey,
 To wreak on them the vengeance of their loss,
 A world redeemed by Jesus on the Cross !
 “ For ever, and for ever *ye* are ours,
 Ye who despised your God, in sensual bowers ;
 Who followed your own will, as we have done,
 Rebels like us, *ye* have we fairly won !

For ever lost all hope, and love of God,
Like us 'believe, and tremble' at His rod.
With knowledge now of all He can bestow,
The pain of loss shall cause your deepest woe.
The hearts, which He had made for love and joy,
With hate shall burn, and foul disgust shall cloy.
Your every sense in weariness, and pain,
The rack of hell shall aggravate, and strain.
Bitter contentions, crashing endless brawls ;
On each the misery of his brother falls.
Without a ray of kindly sympathy,
But fresh disgust, and ceaseless enmity.
If rolling years could bring you some relief,
Some glimpse of hope, ye then might bear your
 grief!
But ye are ours !—From us ye ne'er can sever ;
Linked by the flames of reprobates for ever !”

And now these wretched Souls distinctly hear
The choral triumph from the upper sphere.
The choir of cherubim exulting sing,
In burst of joy, “ Oh Death ! where is thy sting ?”
“ And where, Oh hell ! the seraphim reply
In highest love, ‘ Where is thy victory ?’
‘ The sting of death is sin,’ both choirs proclaim,
But thanks be to His power, and His name,
The Lord, our Christ, has risen from the dead,
The first fruit of the faithful, as He said ;

‘For us in Adam sinners all must die,
So they in Christ shall live eternally !’”

Return we to the Cross, when one by one,
The friends of Jesus have returned alone,
Each from his hiding nook, and meet around.
The faithful Mother, on that hallowed ground.
From Pilate they have won the tardy grace,
To lay His body in its resting place :
And now proceed, with ladders and with bands,
To loosen from the Cross His sacred hands,
While others tend the feet : with gentle ease
They lay the body on His mother’s knees.
And as she gazes on each wounded part,
The sixth dread thrust is fixed within her heart.
Yet meekly firm she still no succour asks,
But perseveres through all her sacred tasks,
Of freeing from the wounded Head each thorn,
Of cleansing and embalming every torn
And wounded feature : every relic there
Placing apart with reverential care.
The form Divine then kissing, she consigned
To John, the friend beloved, to wash and bind.
All precious ointments, mixed with spices rare,
For honour to His burial they prepare :
Then wrapped the destined linen, new and fine,
In ample folds around the form Divine.
Aremathea’s pious Joseph gave

This costly linen, and his own new grave ;
A Sepulchre wherein no man had laid.
And mournfully rejoiced when thus he paid
His tribute of respect and faithful love
To Him whom he acknowledged Lord above.
And now down Calvary's steep in silent fear,
The timid band support the funeral bier,
And gain the garden gate of Joseph's tomb,
Where one has faithful watched until they come.
Then entered many friends, to weep and see,
And all the women, too, from Galilee.
And fondly, in their zeal, they mark the tomb,
And now returning in the evening gloom,
Resolve that when the Sabbath rest is past,
They will indemnify their love at last :
Collecting richest spices, and prepare
The ointments they consider choice and rare,
To place around and on the form Divine,
Worthy of all—His soul's most precious shrine !
While Mary, also forced to quit that part,
Receives the last deep thrust within her heart,
Her "Seventh Dolour ;" but still calm in Faith,
Hopes in the love, which stronger is than death.

HYMN FOR HOLY SATURDAY.

What intermediate hours of chequered feeling !
That form divine still lies within the tomb ;
Yet, from our sorrowing watch we're slowly stealing,
To wreath fresh flowers of sweetest scent and
bloom.
The " Light of Christ " proclaims that He is nigh.
We cast aside the trappings of our woe :
The Paschal torch gleams forth mid chaunting high,
And heralds' bells once more their sound bestow.

Ah ! faithful Church, to dwell on what has been,
With vivid sympathy and tender part.
A loving actor in each moving scene,
The past is present in her spousal heart !

The morn had scarcely dawned on all the woe
The holy women then had learned to know.
When Mary is inspired to go alone,
That Sabbath past to meet her risen Son !
A meeting far beyond what fancy paints,
Revealed in part to highly favoured saints,
And given and treasured thus the veil within,
Because the Lord had died alone for sin ;
And therefore Magdalen, with contrite heart,
Was known to be the first who could impart

The resurrection of the Paschal Lamb,—
 The cancelled debt, that sin no more may damn ;
 And during these mysterious forty days,
 Fulfilling His last mission, while he stays
 To hover round the faithful, heretofore
 Partaking of their rest, and food, and store,
 Now as an apparition—meant to try
 Their faith and hope, and love, and purify
 From flesh and blood—yet He revisits still
 The Virgin blest, to teach His further will.
 And that e'en these His visits now must cease.
 But He will leave with her His constant "Peace,"
 When He ascends, with all His rescued train,
 Rich "Gifts" for her, and others to obtain.

And lo ! the eternally appointed hour
 Has come, and He, by sole and innate power,
 Having "All finished" from His human birth,
 Majestic rises from the ransomed earth.
 And while a cloud receives Him from their gaze,
 And they lament their loss, in dread amaze,
 They hear the angel's blest assurance given,
 "He, who is gone, shall come again from heaven."
 And now, by faith, we pierce that cloud, and see,
 Upraised with Him, a countless company,
 Myriads Redeemed, who lived before the Flood,
 And trusted in the Mediator's blood.

And those whose souls he had resolved to save,
 Although their bodies perished in the wave.
 And then uprose the patriarchal race,
 And faithful tribes of Israel, through grace,
 To gain the joys, which only He could win,
 And celebrate God's triumph over sin.
 The "Men of Galilee," consoled in heart,
 Retired, with Mary, thence to keep apart,
 With watching, and with fasting prayers to blend,
 Till he the promised "Gifts" from heaven should
 send,

Remembering His word that it was meet
 He should depart, and send the Paraclete.
 'Tis not at once to these, His favoured few,
 He send the gifts—instruction deep as true :
 Ten days have passed, when lo ! an awful sound
 Rushes like mighty wind, above, around,
 And now in vivid flames of fiery red,
 Alights, in cloven tongues, on each one's head.
 Oh Mary ! Oh Apostles ! do not fear.
 The promised Comforter, His gifts to bear,
 Is come, all strength to give, all truth to teach,
 Miraculous the powers within your reach.
 By God the Holy Ghost now fully given,
 To this, the Christian Church, and Spouse of
 heaven.

CANTO XIV.

MARY'S RESIGNATION TO LIVE—A DESOLATE SOUL—THE SEVEN
 SACRAMENTS—TRIUMPH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
 IN ROME—FEAST OF CORPUS DOMINI—THE EARLY CHRIS-
 TIAN—DISCIPLINE OF THE SECRET—RE-UNION OF GOD
 THE SON WITH HIS BLESSED MOTHER IN HIS MIRACLE
 OF LOVE—DEATH OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

SWEET Mother of the Church ! thy latter days,
 So full of patient hope, of prayer, of praise,
 Bereaved of sensible support and joy,
 May well thy children's thoughts and pen employ.
 And while they gaze on thy calm holy brow
 And placid smile, they cry, " Ah ! tell me how
 To bear mine exile from my heavenly home,
 Uncertain of the length of days to come ?"
 Thy love exceeds mine own, and yet I pine
 In restless yearnings for the Spouse Divine.
 And looking all around, in sore distate,
 Would willingly death's tardy footsteps haste :
 Though still for me perchance, long years e'en then,
 Of sad detention, mid the souls of men ;

While thou, Oh Mary ! thou wert sure to fly
 To instant rapturous union in the sky.
 How then this long tranquillity of mind ?
 We pause to meditate, and then we find
 Thy happiness, thy heaven was ever still
 To perfectly obey His treasured will.
 The source was this of thy heroic calm,
 Thy hidden heart's ease, and thy sweetest balm.
 Oh ! Virgin Mother, should one desolate
 Thus commune with his heart, then pity take.

HYMN IN DESOLATION.

Lie still, my soul, beneath the lowering blast,
 Dark though it be,
 And though there roll,
 In thundering scroll,
 A stern decree,
 Which heavily, and bitterly may last.

In meekness, and in hope, and not aloud
 Must be thy moan,
 Yes ! all alone ;
 For is there heart
 On earth has part
 With thine in all life's fluctuating crowd ?

Let then the terrors of the chastening rod
 Crush and annihilate
 All lordly state,
 All self-esteem,
 All fancy's dream,
 Let me but love Thy will, 'tis all I ask my God.

The early Church had now in full received,
 Besides the Pentacostal Gifts decreed,
 The seven precious fountains, too, of health,
 Flowing unceasingly, with stores of wealth :
 Rich Sacramental streams, the Church's dower,
 From Jesu's merits, and His Spirit's power.
 First in the limpid wave the tarnished soul
 From sin primæval washed, and was made whole.
 And if in actual sin then after found,
 Could, if repentant, seek where erst abound
 The mercy of the Lord : confession made,
 And deeds of expiation duly paid.
 For strength to fight the battles of the Lord,
 The bishop's hands, with heaven-inspired word
 And Holy Chrism, armed the combatant,
 And urged him e'en for martyrdom to pant.
 While if on dying bed the Christian lay,
 The Elders of the Church would o'er him pray,
 Anointing him with holy oils, to cure
 And raise him up, life's evils to endure :
 And freeing him from e'en the roots of sin,
 By this last unction life in Christ to win !

Ah ! what fidelity did he not feel
 Was due to grace thus given to cleanse and heal !
 The Sacramental stream then also flowed
 On all the spousal ties, and grace bestowed
 To love in purity, nor rival take,
 But govern and obey for Jesu's sake :
 In hope to say when time no more shall be,
 " Behold the children Thou hast given me !"
 But oh ! what awful, yet consoling power,
 The stream of grace conveyed, when in the hour
 Of generous devotion of his soul,
 The priest received the sacred rite in whole
 Of ordination ! Truly God alone,
 Could thus have honoured him, who then outshone
 By God's decree, the very angel's might,
 Who gaze with admiration on the sight
 Of man, who by the power conveyed within
 Can bind, or can release the soul from sin ;
 Nay more—can by the Saviour's words of love,
 Recal Him from His mercy-seat above ;
 The joy of heaven and the dread of hell,
 On humble altars of the earth to dwell ;
 In actual, though, in hidden flesh and blood,
 In resurrection's glory for our food !
 Truly the spousal Church doth well decree,
 That a return of love should ever be :
 And fitly sets apart a special day
 For all her children, in one hallowed lay,

Of grateful jubilation, heart and word,
 To recognise "the body of the Lord."
 "The feast of God;" with joyful octave kept,
 When manly hearts for tenderness have wept,
 And infants have subdued their native glee,
 To watch and kneel, in pleased solemnity.
 We then may see, in ever favoured Rome,
 The long processions through her columns come.
 These are her Christian triumphs—this her pride,
 To bear the Body of the Crucified!
 His triple crown then laid aside, the priest
 Supreme o'er all the Church, on this great feast,
 In humble mien in presence of his Lord
 His bearer walks, enjoying his reward
 For faith like Peter's strong. Oh! monarch wise,
 Whose kingdom mystical, beneath the skies,
 No equal has. Vicegerent thou of God!
 Fitly thou bearest Him on saintly sod,
 Bedewed by blood of martyrs, while the train
 Of bishops and confessors, still sustain
 The glory of the Church! On such a day,
 One, midst the crowd, thus breathed a humble lay.

HYMN FOR CORPUS CHRISTI.

While others twine the rose of June,
 With lily and with eglantine,
 And raise on high the hallowed tune,
 With voices full, to theme divine,

I scarce can move the train along,
Or gaze on yonder canopy ;
I cannot utter note of song,
Or free from blinding tears mine eye,

And yet my tears are those of joy,
My loving heart prevents my lay ;
I fain would all my powers employ,
On this most blest and happy day.

And if when musing now upon
Thy miracles of love to man ;
And *this*, of all the crowning one,
Which Thou alone, my God, could'st plan,

I feel such grateful joy intense,
' Thy real Presence to discern,
What may I hope, when every sense
Shall rapture join, on Thee to turn !

Not in Saint Mary's time such triumphs.—Then
It was the discipline of prudence, that to men,
Illumined not, with hearts still hard and cold,
The miracle of Love should not be told.
And secretly by night, or early dawn,
For fear of desecration and of scorn,
To subterranean vaults, or martyr's tomb,
In silence would the timid Christians come.
The humble Altar then encircling round,

While Catechumens kept, without the bound,
Their faithful watch : not even they aware
Of *Whom* they guarded. Secret true as rare !
And yet at times betrayed : or partly known
Enough to be distorted. Would they own
The calumnies against them, they might plead
For pardon from their Judges, but they bleed,
In martyrs lingering torments to record
They have received the Body of their Lord !
Not in the vague and mystic sense which they
Who wished to save them, tried to make them say :
Still firmly all repeat that not the dead,
But living Christ they have received as Bread.
The risen Body, full of life and blood,
Soul and Divinity to be their food !
Boldly rejecting the insidious plea
Of taking only spiritually.
Long ages did the discipline endure
Of secrecy : until the Church secure
From Jewish tribe, or fell barbarian horde,
Could openly adore the hidden Lord.

If with these earliest Christians, gratitude
And holy love their favoured breasts imbued,
When *He*, once known to them, descended there,
Communicating graces true and rare,
What union—what re-union—with her Son,
The chosen Mary must she not have won !

He whom she once had nourished, now descends
To be her nourishment and strength, and blends
Her life with His : till her pure days,
So full of prayer, fidelity, and praise,
Draw nigh their close,—and now are gathering seen,
With tender veneration in their mien,
Peter, and John, and all the Apostles round
Her dying bed, treading on holy ground.
They watch the shrine in which their God had laid,
In virtue perfect, by His fiat made :
And deeply mourn that they no more shall see
This Relic of the risen Deity.
They beg her holy intercession, when
In glory she will think on suffering men.
And Mary gives her promise ne'er to cease
For them, Church Militant, her aid for peace,
With perseverance 'gainst their hellish foe ;
Then humbly craves, in accents sweet and low,
A benediction from the chosen One,
Head of the Church and Vicar of her Son.
Peter the aged Penitent, whose cheek
By tears is furrowed, and whose aspect meek
Reflects the lowly feelings of his breast ;
Yet placed by God supreme o'er all the rest ;
Obedient now to every call of heaven,
And full of faith in that great promise given,
“ Whoever thou shalt bless, may he be blest,”
Refuses not the Virgin's last request :

For our example made, that our research
May be the rites and blessing of the Church.
So calmly passed Saint Mary's soul away,
From this dark earth, to brightest realms of day :
So gentle in its majesty that corse
That never sinned—that never knew remorse ;
That inspiration only made them know
The corse alone remained to them below.



CANTO XV.

MARY'S SOUL AND BODY ARE ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN AND
ENTHRONED IN GLORY—WELCOME OF THE ANGELS AND
SOULS IN BLISS—VISIT TO MARY'S TOMB—HER VISITS TO
EARTH—CONCLUSION OF THE POEM.

HIGH on the throne of glory, o'er the choirs
Which He hath raised, progressive in desires
Of love, and homage, and degrees of power,
Reigns the Eternal ! What beyond the hour
When by His force divine, the Son of Man
Ascended Conqueror, could heaven plan,
The triumph of the human race to show,
And crush the serpent in his toils below ?
What could the risen Saviour more intend
Of joy to Saints, and Angels now to blend ?
In expectation high the vaults along
Are hushed ;—then burst the chorus full in song.

HYMN FOR THE ASSUMPTION.

Say who is she, that from the earth,
Leaning on her beloved, to birth
Immortal rises ? 'Tis our Queen!
Clothed with the sun, in glory bright,
On the subjected orb of night,
She stands in lovely mien.

Around her head each numbered star,
Its brilliant rays darts near and far,
In diadem divine :
As truly suits our King to place
O'er that maternal brow where grace
And love for ever shine.

He once was cradled in her arms :
And shall He not, for those pure charms,
Assumed with her bright soul,
In highest heaven a throne prepare
At His right hand ? Oh ! who may dare
A Mother's claim controul ?

And who may rashly dare deny
Those nuptials with the Deity,
Which gives the spousal claim,
To reign as Consort of the King,
With whom all gifts and graces spring,
The Holy Ghost His name ?

The earth's foundations were not laid
When the elected Daughter played
Before the eternal throne ;
God spake to that blest soul, and said,
“ Hearken, oh ! Daughter, chosen maid,
My child whom now I own.

Incline thine ear unto my voice ;
Forget thy people—let thy choice
Be this, thy home above !”—
Then let the cherished Daughter claim
Within her Father's mansion—fame
And dignity, and love.

His sacred form preserved, as perfect Man
Leading the perfect Woman—such the plan
Eternal in decree—amid the song
Which thrills the highest vaults of heaven along,
Jesus conducts to where Her place shall be,
Above all creatures, next to Deity.
His praises first the tuneful choirs employ,
“ Thy throne, oh God ! is filled with endless joy.
The sceptre of thy kingdom, just and pure
In its uprightness, ever shall endure.
Thy government and glory ne'er shall cease.
Almighty God the Son, true Prince of Peace !”
Hail Virgin Mother of our gracious King !
The nine angelic choirs now softer sing ;

While the triumphant Church re-echoes then
Hail ! thou most tender Mother to all men !
If when on earth, thy supplication made
Thy Son to yield, what He had erst delayed.
Oh ! what will He not grant, when thou wilt stand
The sinners' advocate, at His right hand ?
Clothed in his justice as a garment fair,
With every varied virtue pure and rare.
Yes ! there is placed a throne ; and She is seen
On His right hand, our Mother and our Queen !
While such the triumphs of the upper sphere,
The earthly mourners of a life so dear,
Return to visit and to pray around,
The tomb of Mary, where on hallowed ground,
The valley of Jehosophat within,
They had consigned the flesh that knew no sin.
'Tis peaceful all around, and near the tomb,
But when approaching, in the morning bloom,
With consternation each a cry restrains,
The slab is gone that covered her remains.
They look within—her sacred form has fled !
Yes ! she has risen from the silent dead !
Within the tomb spring forth the choicest flowers,
Lilies entwined with roses, as in bowers
Of living culture, gracefully ascend
Their fragrance, and their beauty so to blend
In silent consolation to each heart ;
And filled with pleasing awe they all depart,

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To ponder over and record the same,
Transmitted by the Church to endless fame.
Of all our Lady's feasts, in these our days,
Whether of joy of sorrow or of praise,
We truly feel, whiche'er we love the best,
The Feast of the Assumption crowns the rest !

SECOND HYMN ON THE ASSUMPTION.

Thy life so full of varied charms,
Mary my filial heart has won,
From infancy till thy blest arms
Embraced thy Maker and thy Son.

Thenceforth I trace in every part
That sevenfold sword of grief foreseen
Piercing through thy maternal heart
What sorrows, Mary, they have been !

And though for His sake grief was o'er
When he had left thee for the skies,
Twelve piercing years Thou didst deplore
The loss of holiest, dearest ties.

Now thou art happy ! and illumed
With glory above all the saints :
Thy soul and body both assumed,
Oh ! what a scene my fancy paints.

I see thee placed at His right hand
Who once was cradled in thine arms ;
I hear from all the angelic band
The humble Mary's mystic charms.

Ah ! do not in thy bliss forget
When thou this earth in sorrow trod ;
And plead for this poor mortal yet,
Sweet Mary ! Mother of my God !

Mary was taken to her heavenly home,
With all the gifts of resurrection's bloom.
Angelic attributes are hers at will
To move, all acts of mercy to fulfil.
Impassible and agile, from above,
In all the ardour of a mother's love,
In sweetest semblance of her mortal state,
She visits earth, to now avert the faith
Of wilful sinner, now console the just,
Imparting messages of hope and trust :
Teach now the ignorant of willing heart,
And now the judgments of the Lord impart.
Thus have we lately seen the stubborn Jew
Fall prostrate in the Christian Church at view
Of Mary, full of Majesty and love,
Instructing him in wisdom from above :
Till he, a Christian, answer'd to the call,
" She spoke not, but I understood it all !"

To some she has imparted, favoured few !
Her life within the Temple, hid from view :
To other saints her life at Nazareth :
To others how she yielded up her breath.
And these, so favoured friends, have deemed it due,
To tell of their sweet Mother, all they knew.
Where she is loved and trusted, there we find
The Godhead of the Son preserved in mind.
For those alone can dread the Mother's claim,
Who lower His divinity and name !
Jesus whose Godhead all the world must fill.
Mary the creature of His holy will.
He perfect man, all evil to repair
She perfect woman, innocent as fair.
And thus alone is fully seen the plan,
Complete in all its parts to rescue man.
One God—the persons must coequal be
Who form the awful glorious Trinity !

Farewell ! my pen,—farewell my holy theme,
Though not farewell to thoughts beyond all dream,
Or flights of poesy : more full, more true,
As early scenes receding from the view,
With all their ties of country and of friends,
Leave an horison which with heaven blends.

Oh Rome ! thou city favoured, and apart,
Of Christendom the lifeblood and the heart.
City of Mary—where are found the chains
Of golden links, which high above retains
The grasp of Jesus !—in thy faithful breast,
With treasures laden, may I sink to rest !

Rome, 1846.



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